



The Globe Edition

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



POETICAL WORKS OF  
ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

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## TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base,*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there,*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song,  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
'She wrought her people lasting good,*

*' Her court was pure, her life serene,  
God gave her peace, her land reposed,  
A thousand clowns to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen,*

*' And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom under yet*

*' By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
' Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

## JUVENILIA.

### CLARIBEL

#### A METHOD

##### I

WHEN Claribel low lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose leaves fall  
But the solemn oak tree sigheth,  
Thick leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low lieth

##### II

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone  
Her song the lute white swelleth,  
The clear voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow thrushle hspeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling rannel crispeth,  
The hollow grot repleth  
Where Claribel low-lieth

### NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be weary of  
flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be weary of blowing  
Over the sky?

When will the clouds be weary of  
fleeing?

When will the heart be weary of  
beating?

And nature die?

Never, oh! never, nothing will die;

The stream flow,

The wind blow,

The clouds fleet

The heart beat,

Nothing will die

Nothing will die,

All things will change

Thro' eternity

'Tis the world's winter.

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago;

Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring is new come,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,

Thro' and thro',

Here and there,

Till the air

And the ground

Shall be fill'd with life anew

The world was never made,

It will change, but it will not fade

So let the wind range,

For even and morn

Ever will be

Thro' eternity

Nothing was born,

Nothing will die,

All things will change

## ✓ ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
flowing

Under my eye,  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are  
blowing

Over the sky  
One after another the white clouds are  
fleeting;

Every heart this May morning in joyance  
is beating

Full merrily

Yet all things must die  
The stream will cease to flow,  
The wind will cease to blow,  
The clouds will cease to fleet,  
The heart will cease to beat.

For all things must die

All things must die  
Spring will come never more  
Oh! vanity!

Death waits at the door  
See! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking  
We are call'd—we must go  
Laid low, very low,  
In the dark we must lie  
The merry glees are still,  
The voice of the bird  
Shall no more be heard,  
Nor the wind on the hill

Oh! misery!

Hark! death is calling  
While I speak to ye,  
The jaw is falling,  
The red cheek paling,  
The strong limbs failing,  
Ice with the warm blood mixing,  
The eyeballs fixing  
Nine times goes the passing bell  
Ye merry souls, farewell

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago

And the old earth must die  
So let the warm winds range,  
And the blue wave beat the shore,

For even and morn  
Ye will never see  
Thro' eternity  
All things were born  
Ye will come never more,  
For all things must die

## LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the  
broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming  
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only  
the far river shines

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers  
of rose-blowing bushes,  
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble  
and fall

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly, the  
grasshopper carolleteth clearly;

Deeply the wood dove coos; shrilly the  
owllet halloos,

Winds creep, dew falls chilly in her  
first sleep earth breathes stilly

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats  
murmur and mourn

Sadly the far kine loweth the glimmer-  
ing water outfloweth

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to  
the dark hyaline

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between  
the two peaks, but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him  
beneath in her breast

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-  
perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind bring me  
my love, Rosalind

Thou comest morning or even, she  
cometh not morning or even

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my  
sweet Rosalind?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.  
I faint, I fall Men say that Thou



Didst die for me, for such as I,  
 Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
 And that my sin was as a thorn  
 Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
 Wounding Thy soul — That even now,  
 In this extremest misery  
 Of ignorance, I should require  
 A sign ! and if a bolt of fire  
 Would rive the slumbrous summer noon  
 While I do pray to Thee alone,  
 Think my belief would stronger grow !  
 Is not my human pride brought low ?  
 The boastings of my spirit still ?  
 The joy I had in my freewill  
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown ?  
 And what is left to me, but Thou,  
 And faith in Thee ? Men pass me by,  
 Christians with happy countenances—  
 And children all seem full of Thee !  
 And women smile with saint-like glances  
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
 Above Thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And Thou and peace to earth were born  
 Goodwill to me as well as all—  
 I one of them my brothers they  
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day,  
 And trust and hopeful things should cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all

How sweet to have a common faith !  
 To hold a common scorn of death !  
 And at a burial to hear  
 The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, whence'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet !

Thrice happy state again to be  
 The trustful infant on the knee !  
 Who lets his rosy fingers play  
 About his mother's neck, and knows  
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes  
 They comfort him by night and day  
 They light his little life away,  
 He hath no thought of coming woes,  
 He hath no care of life or death,  
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
 Because the Spirit of happiness

And perfect rest so inward is,  
 And loveth so his innocent heart,  
 Her temple and her place of birth,  
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
 Life of the fountain there, beneath  
 Its silent springs, and far apart,  
 Hating to wander out on earth,  
 Or breathe into the hollow air,  
 Whose chillness would make viable  
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
 Fulfills him with benediction  
 On ! sure 't is a special care  
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
 To arm in proof, and give about  
 With triple mailed trust, a clear  
 Delight, the infant's drawing year

Would that my glommed face, like  
 As thine, my mother, when with brows  
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
 In thine, I listen'd to thy voice,  
 For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
 For me unworthy !—and I shold  
 Thy mild deep eyes expressed, that I new  
 The beauty and repose of faith,  
 And the clear spirit shiner, thro'  
 Oh ! wherefore do we grow away  
 From roots which strike so deep ? why  
 dare

Paths in the desert ? Could not I  
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,  
 To the earth—until the ice world melt  
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?  
 What Devil had the heart to scathe  
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the  
 dew

From thine own lip, when thy grave  
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?  
 Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had I  
 So little love for thee ? But why  
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers ? Why  
 pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
 But will no ? Great in faith, and strong  
 Against the grief of circumstance  
 Wert thou, and yet unheard What if  
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
 Thro' utter dark a full sail'd skiff,  
 Unpiloted by the echoing dance



## THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep,  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth faintest sunlight  
flee

About his shadowy sides above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and  
height,

And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret  
cell

Unnumber'd and enormous polyp  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering  
green

There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep,  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-  
face die

## SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free'

The streams through many a lilyd row  
Down carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free'

## 'LILIAN

I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can,  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian

II

When my passion seel's  
Pleasure in love sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speak  
So innocent arch, so cunning simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black bearded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughter dimple  
The baby roses in her cheeks,  
Then away she flies

III

Prythee weep, May Lilian  
Gaily without eclipse  
Weneth me, May Lilian  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson threaded lips  
Silver-true laughter tinkleth  
Prythee weep, May Lilian

IV

Prying all I can,  
If prayers will no hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian

## ISABEL

I

Eyes not down dropt nor over-bright,  
but fed  
With the clear pointed flame of charity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tenued by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-  
lucent fane  
Of her still spirit, locks not wide dispreed,  
Madonna-wise on either side her  
head,  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did  
reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wisdom and pure lowly-  
head

## II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough edged intellect to part  
Error from crime, a prudence to  
withhold.

The laws of marriage character'd in  
fold

Upon the bleached tablets of her heart  
A love still burning onward, giving light  
To read those laws, an even, very low  
In blandishment, but a too 'silver flow  
Of subtle pearl conceal'd in distress  
Right to the heart and brain, tho' unde-  
scry'd,

Winding its way with extreme gentle-  
ness

Thro' all the networks of suspicious pride,  
A course to endure and to obey;  
A love of justice and of way,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life.  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect  
wife

## III.

The yellow'd reflex of a winter moon,  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it ab-orbs  
With swifter momentum and in purer  
light

The veer'd eddies of its wayward  
brother

A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else had  
fallen quite

With cluster'd flower bells and am-  
orous orbs

Of rich fruit bunches leaning on each  
other—

Shadow forth thee—the world hath  
not another

(Tho' all her forest forms are types of  
thee,

And thou of God in thy great charity)  
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity

## MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange'

*Measure for Measure*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the pear to the gable wall  
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange  
Unlifted was the clinking latch,  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange  
She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said,  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even,  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried,  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide  
After the sitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trince the sky,  
She drew her casement curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats  
She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said,  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night fowl crow  
The cock sung out an hour ere light  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
morn

About the lonely moated grange  
She only said 'The day is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said,  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept

Hard by a poplar shook away,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said,  
 She said, 'I am aweary, weary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said,  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd,  
 The blue fly sung in the pane, the mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot  
 shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voice called her from without  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said,  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense, but most she loathed the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower  
 Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
 He will not come,' she said,  
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 Oh God, that I were dead!'

## TO —

## I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts at aim  
 The knots that tangle human creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain

## II

Low cowering shall the Sophist sit,  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit  
 Nor martyr flames, nor trenchant swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie,  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words

## III

Weak Truth a-lerning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning speed,  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penuel

## MADELINE

## I

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline  
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of fitting change

## II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love lore  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
 Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light glooming over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun fringed, are thine,

Ever varying Madeline

Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
 From one another,

Each to each is dearest brother;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny wool

Momentarily into each other

All the mystery is thine;

Smiling frowning, evermore,

Thou art perfect in love lore,

Ever varying Madeline

## III.

A subtle, sudden flame,

By veering, passion fann'd,  
 About thee breaks and dances.

When I would kiss thy hand,  
 The flash of anger'd shame

O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
 And o'er black brows drops down

A sudden curved frown

But when I turn away,

Thou, viling me to stay,

Woo st not, nor vainly wranglest;

But, looking fixedly the while,

All my bounding heart entanglest

In a golden-netted smile,

Then in madness and in bliss,

If my lips should dare to kiss

Thy taper fingers amorously,

Again thou blushest angrily,

And o'er black brows drops down

A sudden curved frown

## SONG—THE OWL

## I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits

## II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the  
 thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,

Twice or thrice his roundelay,

Alone and warming his five wits,

The white owl in the belfry sits,

## SECOND SONG

## TO THE SAME

## I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,

Thy tuwhoo- of yesternight,

Which upon the dark assort,

So took echo with delight,

So took echo with delight,

That her voice untuneful grown,

Wears all day a fainter tone

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew,

But I cannot mimick it,

Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

With a lengthen'd loud halloo,

Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo o o

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew  
 free

In the silken sail of infancy,

The tide of time flow'd back with me,

The forward-flowing tide of time,

And many a sheeny summer-morn,

Adown the Tigris I was borne,

By Bagdat's shrines of settled gold,  
High walled gardens green and old,  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,

For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron shadows in the blue  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamp-light dim,  
And broder'd sofas on each side

In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Often, where clear stemm'd platan guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat herd down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmov'n, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star strown cum,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbow'rd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heav'nward, were stay'd beneath the dome

Of hollow boughs — A goodly time  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward, and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake  
From the green ravage many a fall  
Of diamond rills musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling fints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Above thro' many a bowery tum  
A walk with vary colour'd cum,  
Wander'd engrain'd On either side  
All round about the fragrant cum  
From slated eaves, and louver turn  
In order, eastern flowers large  
Some dropping to the crystal bells  
Half closed, and others staid and wide  
With delicate and rare fed cum  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

It was off, and where the lake on grove  
In closest coquette up sprung,  
The living airs of midnight night  
Died round the blazon as he sung,  
Not but some cornet in which poured  
The darkness of the world, d-d-d-d,  
Jiff, angish, d-d-d, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, and cum'd,  
Apart from place, with hush and time,  
But fluttering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Black the garden box cum and grove  
Slumber'd the cold and palm were ringer  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flash'd all the leaves with rich gold green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counter-changed  
The level lake with diamond plots  
Of dark and bright A lovely time  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Dark-blue the deep sphere over-arch'd,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew dark'er from that under-flame:  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left astort,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
 A realm of pleasure, many a mound,  
 And many a shadow chequer'd lawn  
 Full of the city's silly sound,  
 And deep myribs-thickets blowing round  
 The stately cedar tamarisks,  
 Thick roses of scented thorn,  
 Tall cypress-shrubs, and obelisks  
 Given with emblems of the time,  
 In honour of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid

With dazed vision unawares  
 From the leafy alley's latticed shade  
 Emerged, I came upon the great  
 Pavement of the Caliphate  
 Right to the carved cedar doors,  
 Flung inward over spangled floors,  
 Broad-bronze figures of marble stairs  
 Run up with golden dust-rose,  
 After the fashion of the time,  
 And honour of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid

The four-core windows all slight  
 As with the counter-ence of flame,  
 A million tapers flaring bright  
 From the silver look'd to flame  
 The hollow vaulted dark, and stream'd  
 Upon the moaned domes a roof  
 In myriad lights, till there seem'd  
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
 Of nightne green, that marvellous time  
 To celebrate the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid

Then took I up, and trance'dly  
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Scarcely with arched-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a curl delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose bud zone  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which

Down droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and draped  
 With unwrought flowers, a cloth of gold  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him—in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

## ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,  
 Visit my low desire!  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I hunt in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory

II

Come not as thou comest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day, but robed in soften'd  
 light

Of orient state  
 Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,

Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have  
 kiss'd,

When, she, as thou,  
 Stay on her flowing locks the lovely freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare

III

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,

And with the evening cloud,  
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
 open breast

(Those peerless flowers which in the  
 rudest wind

Never grow sear,



When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
 Because they are the earliest of the year)  
 Nor was the night thy shroud  
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
 Hope

The eddying of her garments caught from thee  
 The light of thy great presence, and the cope

Of the half attain'd futurity,  
 Tho' deep not fathomless,  
 Was cloven with the million stars which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy  
 Small thought was there of life's distress,  
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
 could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
 Listening the lordly music flowing from  
 The illimitable years

O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory

## IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
 eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting  
 vines

Unto mine inner eye,  
 Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
 Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried  
 Come from the woods that belt the gray  
 hill side,

The seven elms, the poplars four  
 That stand beside my father's door,  
 And chiefly from the brook that loves  
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
 Or duple in the dark of rushy coves,  
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,  
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
 O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
 folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,  
 When the first matin song hath waken'd  
 loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
 What time the amber morn  
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
 cloud

## V

Large downies doth the raptured eye  
 To the young spirit present

When first she is wed,  
 And like a bride of old

In triumph led,  
 With music and sweet showers  
 Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway  
 Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
 In setting round thy first experiment  
 With royal frame work of wrought  
 gold,

Needs must thou dearly love thy first  
 essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery  
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
 Upon the storied walls,

For the discovery  
 And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
 Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
 With thee unto the love thou bearest  
 The first-born of thy genius Artist-like,  
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labour of thine early days  
 No matter what the sketch might be;  
 Whether the high field on the bushless  
 Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge  
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous  
 marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,  
 Like emblems of infinity,  
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky,  
 Or a garden bower'd close

With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near  
 Purple-spiked lavender  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,

With youthful fancy re inspired,  
 We may hold converse with all forms

Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, my mad-minded

My friend, with you to live alone,  
 Were how much better than to own  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !

O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory

### SONG

I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers

To himself he talks ;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and  
 sigh

In the walks ,

Earthward he boweth the heavy  
 stalks

Of the mouldering flowers

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower

Over its grave ! the earth so chilly ,

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,

Heavily hangs the tiger-lily

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh  
 repose

An hour before death ,

My very heart faints and my whole soul  
 grieves

At the most rich smell of the rotting  
 leaves,

And the breath  
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower

Over its grave ! the earth so chilly ,

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,

Heavily hangs the tiger lily

### A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, ' The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye

He spake of beauty that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ,  
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair  
 And said the earth was beautiful

He spake of virtue not the gods  
 More purely, when they wish to charm  
 Pallas and Juno sitting by  
 And with a sweeping of the arm,  
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
 Devolved his rounded periods

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvass'd human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold  
 Upon himself himself did feed  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek

### THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above ,  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn  
 of scorn,  
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good  
and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,

Before him lay with echoing feet he  
threaded  
The secretest walks of fame  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were  
headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver  
tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
bore  
Them earthward till they lit,  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth  
anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breath-  
ing spring  
Of Hope and Youth

So many minds d'd gird their orbs with  
beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
dreams  
Of high desire

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the  
world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning  
eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies,  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in  
flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man.  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words No  
sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with her  
word  
She shook the world

## THE POET'S MIND.

### I

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit.  
Vex not thou the poet's mind,  
For thou canst not fathom it  
Clear and bright it should be ever.  
Flowing like a crystal river,  
Bright as light, and clear as wind

### II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear,  
All the place is holy ground,  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around  
The flowers would faint at your cruel  
cheer

In your eye there is death,  
 There is frost in your breath  
 Which would blight the plants  
 Where you stand you cannot hear  
 From the groves within  
 The wild-bird's din  
 In the heart of the garden the merry bird  
 chants  
 It would fall to the ground if you came  
 in  
 In the middle leaps a fountain  
 Like sheet lightning,  
 Ever brightening  
 With a low melodious thunder,  
 All day and all night it is ever drawn  
 From the brain of the purple mountain  
 Which stands in the distance yonder  
 It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
 And the mountain draws it from Heaven  
 above,  
 And it sings a song of undying love,  
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
 full,  
 You never would hear it, your ears are  
 so dull;  
 So keep where you are you are foul with  
 sin;  
 It would shrink to the earth if you came  
 in

### ✓ THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
 Betwixt the green brink and the running  
 foam,  
 Sweet faces rounded arms, and bosoms  
 prest  
 To little harps of gold, and while they  
 mused  
 Whispering to each other half in fear,  
 Shrill music reach'd them on the middle  
 sea

Whither away, whither away, whither  
 away? fly no more  
 Whither away from the high green field,  
 and the happy blossoming shore?  
 Day and night to the billow the fountain  
 calls

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
 From wandering over the lea  
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
 They freshen the silvery crimson shells,  
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill  
 swells

High over the full-toned sea  
 O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
 Come hither to me and to me  
 Hither, come hither and frolic and play,  
 Here it is only the mew that wails,  
 'We will sing to you all the day  
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
 'For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
 'And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
 'And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the  
 land

Over the islands free,  
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the  
 sand,

Hither, come hither and see;  
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising  
 wave,

And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,  
 And sweet shall your welcome be  
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
 For merry brides are we  
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
 sweet words

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 With pleasure and love and jubilee  
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
 chords

Runs up the ridged sea  
 Who can light on as happy a shore  
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er?  
 Whither away? listen and stay mariner,  
 mariner, fly no more

### THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side,  
 Leaving door and windows wide.  
 Careless tenants they!

## II

All within is dark as night  
In the windows is no light,  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before

## III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house

## IV

Come away no more of mirth  
Is here or merry making sound  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground

## V

Come away for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell,  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible  
Would they could have stayed with us!

## THE DYING SWAN

## I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under roof of doleful gray  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament  
It was the middle of the day  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh,  
Above in the wind was the swallow,

Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and  
still

The tangled water courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow

## III

The wild swan's death hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear;  
And floating about the under sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear.  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold,  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the even  
ing star

And the creeping mosses and clambering  
weeds,  
And the willow branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the sighing  
reeds,  
And the wave worn horns of the echoing  
bank,  
And the silvery marsh-flowers that  
throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song

## A DIRGE

## I

Now is done thy long day's work,  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest  
Let them rave  
Shadows of the silver birch  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander,  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form

Let them rave

Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee,  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drop sweeter dews than traitor's tear

Let them rave

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale

Let them rave

These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover

Let them rave

Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave

VII

Wild words wander here and there  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused  
But let them rave

The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave  
Let them rave

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gather-  
ing light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes,  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight

'You must begone,' said Death, 'these  
walks are mine'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
for flight,

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is  
thine

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the  
tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all be-  
neath,

So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death,  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall  
fall,

But I shall reign for ever over all'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana

There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with  
snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,

Oriana,  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana

In the yew wood black as night,

Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,

Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star shine and by moonlight,

Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana

She stood upon the castle wall,

Oriana  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana

She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana

The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
Oriana

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana

Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana,

But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
Oriana

How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana

O breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
Oriana

What wintest thou? whom dost thou seek,  
Oriana?

I cry aloud none hear my cries,  
Oriana

Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
Oriana

I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
Oriana

Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
Oriana

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
Oriana

O happy thou that liest low,  
Oriana

All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
Oriana

A weary, weary way I go,  
Oriana

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
Oriana

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
Oriana

I hear the roaring of the sea,  
Oriana

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;

Two strangers meeting at a festival,  
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard  
 wall;  
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden  
 ease,  
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
 church-tower,  
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed,  
 Two children in one hamlet born and  
 bred,  
 So runs the round of life from hour to  
 hour

## THE MERMAN

## I

WHO would be  
 A merman bold,  
 Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne?

## II

I would be a merman bold,  
 I would sit and sing the whole of the day;  
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of  
 power,  
 But at night I would roam abroad and  
 play  
 With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
 Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
 flower,  
 And holding them back by their flowing  
 locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
 Laughingly, laughingly,  
 And then we would wander away, away  
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight and  
 high,  
 Chasing each other merrily

## III

There would be neither moon nor star,  
 But the wave would make music above  
 us afar—

Low thunder and light in the magic  
 night—

Neither moon nor star

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
 Call to each other and whoop and cry

All night, merrily, merrily;

They would pelt me with starry spangles  
 and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands be-  
 tween,

All night, merrily, merrily

But I would throw to them back in mine

Turkis and agate and almondine

Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,

And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly

Oh! what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green!

Soft are the moss-beds under the sea,

We would live merrily, merrily

## THE MERMAID

## I

WHO would be  
 A mermaid fair,  
 Singing alone,  
 Combing her hair  
 Under the sea,  
 In a golden curl  
 With a comb of pearl,  
 On a throne?

## II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
 I would sing to myself the whole of the  
 day,  
 With a comb of pearl I would comb my  
 hair;  
 And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
 say,  
 'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'  
 I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
 would fall  
 Low adown, low adown,  
 From under my starry sea-bud crown  
 Low adown and around,  
 And I should look like a fountain of gold



Springing alone  
 With a shrill inner sound,  
 Over the throne  
 In the midst of the hall,  
 Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
 Round the hall where I sate, and look  
 in at the gate  
 With his large calm eyes for the love of  
 me.  
 And all the mermen under the sea  
 Would feel their immortality  
 Die in their hearts for the love of me

## III

But at night I would wander away, away,  
 I would fling on each side my low-  
 flowing locks,  
 And lightly vault from the throne and play  
 With the mermen in and out of the  
 rocks,  
 We would run to and fro, and hide and  
 seek,  
 On the broad sea wolds in the crimson  
 shells,  
 Whose silvery spikes are mightiest thesea.  
 But if any came near I would call, and  
 shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I would  
 leap  
 From the diamond-ledges that jut from  
 the dells,  
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
 would list,  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the  
 sea,  
 They would sue me, and woo me, and  
 flatter me,  
 In the purple twilights under the sea,  
 But the king of them all would carry me,  
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
 In the branching jaspers under the sea,  
 Then all the dry p'ed things that be  
 In the hueless mosses under the sea  
 Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
 All looking up for the love of me  
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
 All things that are forked, and horned,  
 and soft

Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
 of the sea,  
 All looking down for the love of me

## ADELINE

## I

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
 Faintly smiling Adeline,  
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
 But beyond expression fair  
 With thy floating flaxen hair;  
 Thy rose lips and full blue eyes  
 Take the heart from out my breast  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II

Whence that nery bloom of thine,  
 Like a lily which the sun  
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
 And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
 As a Naid in a well,  
 Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
 Of a mudden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold?  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline?

## III

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
 For sure thou art not all alone  
 Do beating hearts of salient springs  
 Keep measure with thine own?  
 Hast thou heard the butterflies  
 What they say betwixt their wings?  
 Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dew?  
 Or when little airs arise,  
 How the merry bluebell rings  
 To the mosses underneath?  
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
 Of the lilies at sunrise?

Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind  
What aileth thee? whom warest thou  
With thy soft'ned, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gaze'st at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabran spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lov'elorn,  
Breathing light against thy face,  
While his locks a drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline

## MARGARET

## I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
From all things outward you have  
won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun

The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
Like the tender amber round,  
Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night

## II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
To hear the murmur of the strife,  
But enter not the toil of life  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight  
You are the evening star, alway  
Remaining betwixt dark and bright  
Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
Float by you on the verge of night

## III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
What songs below the waning stars  
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
Sang locking thro' his prison bars?  
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
Just ere the falling axe did part  
The burning brain from the true heart,  
Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
And gave you on your natal day  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
Keeps real sorrow far away  
You move not in such solitudes,  
You are not less divine,  
But more human in your moods,  
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
And less aerially blue,  
But ever trembling thro' the dew  
Of dainty-woeful sympathies

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,

Come down, come down, and hear me  
speak.

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek

The sun is just about to set,

The arching limes are tall and shady,

And faint, rainy lights are seen,

Moving in the leavy beech

Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,

Where all day long you sit between

Joy and woe, and whisper each

Or only look across the lawn,

Look out below your bower-eaves,

Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmine leaves

## ROSALIND

### I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,

My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height of  
rapid flight,

Stoops at all game that wing the skies,

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,

My bright eyed, wild eyed falcon, whither,

Careless both of wind and weather,

Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,

Up or down the streaming wind?

### II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,

The shadow rushing up the sea,

The lightning flash atween the rains,

The sunlight driving down the lea,

The leaping stream, the very wind,

That will not stay, upon his way,

To stoop the cowslip to the plains,

Is not so clear and bold and free

As you, my falcon Rosalind

You care not for another's pains,

Because you are the soul of joy,

Bright metal all without alloy

Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,

Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays

Your hawk eyes are keen and bright,

Keen with triumph, watching still

To pierce me thro' with pointed light;

But oftentimes they flash and glitter

Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight

### III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,

My gay young hawk, my Rosalind -

Too long you keep the upper skies,

Too long you roam and wheel at will,

But we must hood your random eyes,

That care not whom they kill,

And your cheek, whose brilliant hue

Is so sparkling-fresh to view,

Some red heath-flower in the dew,

Touch'd with sunrise We must bind

And keep you fast, my Rosalind,

Fast, fast, my wild eyed Rosalind,

And clip your wings, and make you love

When we have lured you from above,

And that delight of frolic flight, by day  
or night,

From North to South,

We'll bind you fast in silken cords,

And kiss away the bitter words

From off your rosy mouth

## ELEANORE

### I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,

Nor first reveal'd themselves to English  
air,

For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward  
brought,

Moulded thy baby thought.

Far off from human neighbourhood,

Thou wert born, on a summer morn,

A mile beneath the cedar-wood

Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd

With breezes from our oaken glades,

But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
land

Of lavish lights, and floating shades;

And flattering thy childish thought

The oriental fairy brought,

At the moment of thy birth,

From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hulls,  
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny  
 shore,  
 The choicest wealth of all the  
 earth,  
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleanore

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
 dens cull'd—  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd

## III

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
 On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
 blinded  
 With many a deep-hued bell-like  
 flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
 And the crag that fronts the Even,  
 All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsoned over an inland mere,  
 Eleanore!

## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
 How may measured words adore  
 The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
 Eleanore?  
 The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
 Eleanore?  
 Every turn and glance of thine,  
 Every lineament divine,  
 Eleanore,

And the steady sunset glow,  
 That stays upon thee? For in thee  
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single,  
 Like two streams of incense free  
 From one censer in one shrine,  
 Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
 To an unheard melody,  
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
 Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep,  
 Who may express thee, Eleanore?

## V

I stand before thee, Eleanore,  
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile  
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me I would I were  
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleanore!

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling  
 asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly  
 grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,  
 And draw itself to what it was  
 before,  
 So full, so deep, so slow,  
 Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleanore

## I II

As thunder clouds that, hung on high,  
Roof'd the world with doubt and  
fear,

Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
Grow golden all about the sky,  
In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
Losing his fire and active might

In a silent meditation,  
Falling into a still delight,  
And luxury of contemplation  
As waves that up a quiet cove  
Rolling slide, and hush still  
Shadow forth the banks at will

Or sometimes they swell and move,  
Pressing up against the land,  
With motions of the outer sea  
And the self same influence  
Controlleth all the soul and sense  
Of Passion grazing upon thee  
His bow string slacken'd, languid Love,  
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
And so would languish evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleanore.

## I III

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
unconfined,

While the amorous, odorous wind  
Breathes low between the sunset and  
the moon,

Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
On silken cushions half reclined,

I watch thy grace, and in its place  
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,

While I muse upon thy face,  
And a languid fire creeps

Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
Dissolvingly and slowly soon

From thy rose red lips my name  
Floweth, and then, as in a swoon,

With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
My tremulous tongue faltereth,

I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
I drink the cup of a costly death,

Brim'd with delicious draughts of arm-  
rest life.

I die with my delight, before  
I hear what I would hear from  
thee,

Yet tell my name again to me,  
I *will* be dying evermore,  
So dying ever, like more

## KATE

I know her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright black  
hair,

Her rapid laughter wild and shrill,  
As laughter of the woodpecker  
From the hollow of a hill

'Tis Kate— he saith what she will:  
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
Clear is the ringing of a harp

Her heart is like a throbbing star.

Kate hath a smile ever strung  
In a new bow, and bright and sharp  
As edges of the scimitar

Where shall she take a fitting mate?  
For Kate no common love will feel,  
My woman soldier, tallen Kate,  
As pure and true as blades of steel

Kate saith 'the world is void of might'  
Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies'

Kate strips her fierceness at my vows,  
Kate will not baffle of lovers' sight

I would I were an armed knight,  
I am famed for well won enterprise,  
And wearing on my warthy brows  
The garland of new-won emprise.

For in a moment I would pierce  
The blackest files of clanging fight,  
And strongly strike to left and right,

In dreaming of my lady's eyes  
Oh! Kate loves well the bold and  
fierce,

But none are bold enough for Kate  
She cannot find a fitting mate

## I

My life is full of weary days,  
But good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wander'd into other ways  
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go  
Shake hands once more I cannot sink  
So far—far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below

## II

When in the darkness over me  
The four-handed mole shall scripe,  
Plant thou no luskj cypress tree,  
Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,  
But pledge me in the flowing grape

And when the suppy field and wood  
Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
And rugged barks begin to bud,  
And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with  
may,  
Ring sudden scratches of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
And on my clay her darnel grow,  
Come only, when the days are still,  
And at my headstone whisper low,  
And tell me if the woodbines blow

## EARLY SONNETS

## I

## TO —

As when with downcast eyes we muse and  
brood,  
And ebo into a former life, or seem  
To lapse far back in some confused dream  
To states of mystical similitude,  
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
Ever the wonder wavereth more and more,  
So that we say, 'All this hath been before,  
All this hath been, I know not when or  
where'  
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your  
face,  
Our thought gave answer each to each, so  
true—  
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
That tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
Methought that I had often met with you,  
And either lived in either's heart and  
speech

## II

## TO J. M. K

My hope and heart is with thee—thou  
wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's  
feast,  
Our dusted velvets have much need of  
thee  
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd  
homily;  
But spurr'd at heart with fiercest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-  
out clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below Thou from  
a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the  
dark  
Arrows of lightnings I will stand and  
mark

## III

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and  
free,  
Like some broad river rushing down  
alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he  
was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing  
lea —  
Which with increasing might doth forward  
flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,  
and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico

## IV.

## ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right  
 arm debased  
 The throne of Persia, when her Satrap  
 bled  
 At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
 Beyond the Memmian naphtha pits, dis-  
 graced  
 For ever—thee (thy pathway sand erased)  
 Gliding with equal crowns two serpents  
 led  
 Joyful to that palm-planted fountain fed  
 Ammonian Oasis in the waste  
 There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
 Apart the Chammir Oracle divine  
 Shelter'd his unapproched mysteries  
 High things were spoken there, unbranded  
 down,  
 Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
 Returning with hot cheek and kindled  
 eyes

## BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts  
 of oak,  
 Madman!—to chain with chains, and bind  
 with bands  
 That island queen who sways the floods  
 and lands  
 From Ind to Ind, but in furdrylight woke,  
 When from her wooden walls,—lit by  
 sure hands,—  
 With thunders, and with lightnings, and  
 with smoke,—  
 Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
 Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands  
 We taught him lower moods, when El  
 sinore  
 Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
 Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden  
 fires  
 Flamed over at Trafalgar yet once more  
 We taught him late he learned humility  
 Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd  
 with briers

## VI

## POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
 down,  
 And trampled under by the best and least  
 Of men? The heart of Poland hath not  
 ceased  
 To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
 drown  
 The fields, and out of every smouldering  
 town  
 Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
 creased,  
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
 Transgress his ample bound to some new  
 crown —  
 Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall  
 these things be?  
 How long this icy hearted Muscovite  
 Oppress the region?' U, O Just and  
 Good,  
 Forgive, who smiled when she was torn  
 in three,  
 Us, who stand now, when we should aid  
 the right—  
 A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

## VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
 And singing airy trifles thus or that,  
 Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch  
 and stand,  
 And run thro' every change of shape and  
 flat,  
 And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
 When Sleep had bound her in his rosy  
 band,  
 And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
 And woke her with a lay from fairy land  
 But now they live with Beauty less and  
 less,  
 For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
 Nor cares to hup in love's delicious creeds,  
 And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
 Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
 That sets at twilight in a land of reeds

## VIII.

This form, the form alone is eloquent !  
 A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
 Than but to dance and sing, be gaily  
 drest,  
 And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
 ments—  
 Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
 My fancy made me for a woman's best  
 To find my heart so near the beautiful  
 breast—  
 That once I had power to rob it of content  
 A moment came the fierceness of tears,  
 The phantom of a wish that once could  
 move—  
 For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot  
 love,  
 And if you loved her see, a thousand  
 years,  
 She still would take the praise, and care  
 no more

## IX

WAX Sculptor, weepest thou to take the  
 cast  
 Of those dead lineaments 'till near thee  
 lie?  
 O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
 past,  
 In painting some dead friend from memory?  
 Weep on, beyond his object Love can  
 last.  
 His object lives more cause to weep  
 have I :  
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
 No tears of love, but tears that Love can  
 die  
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
 Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—  
 Ah pity—hush it not in human tones,  
 But breathe it into earth and close it up  
 With secret death for ever, in the pits  
 Which some green Christmas crans with  
 weary bones

## X

If I were loved, as I desire to be,  
 What is there in the great sphere of the  
 earth,

And range of evil between death and birth,  
 That I should fear,—if I were loved by  
 thee?  
 All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if  
 thou wert mine,  
 As I have heard that, somewhere in the  
 main,  
 Fresh-water springs come up through  
 bitter brine  
 'I were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand  
 with thee,  
 To wait for death—mute—careless of all  
 ills,  
 Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
 Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into the  
 gorge  
 Below us, as far on as eye could see

## XI

## THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was  
 tied,  
 Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly  
 see,  
 Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for  
 me !'  
 A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride !  
 And then, the couple standing side by  
 side,  
 Love lighted down between them full of  
 glee,  
 And over his left shoulder hugh'd at  
 thee,  
 'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
 bride !'  
 And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
 I or while the tender service made thee  
 weep,  
 I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not  
 hide,  
 And prest thy hand, and knew the press  
 return'd,  
 And thought, 'My life is sick of single  
 sleep  
 O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
 bride !'



## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## AND OTHER POEMS

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky,  
And thro' the field the road runs by

To many tower'd Camelot,  
And up and down the people go,  
Grazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
The Lady of Shalott

By the margin, willow veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses, and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken sail'd

Skimming down to Camelot  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
Down to tower'd Camelot

And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott'

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay

She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
To look down to Camelot  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near  
Winding down to Camelot  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
Pass onward from Shalott

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long hair'd page in crimson clad,  
Goes by to tower'd Camelot,  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
And music, went to Camelot  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed,  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott

## PART III

A BOW SHOT from her bower caves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,

That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott

The gemmy, riddle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rung merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot  
And from his horse's baldric slung  
A mighty silver hanger long,  
As he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott

All in the blue unclouded weather  
The chivalry shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Bar'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded serf sang loud,  
Moan'd over still Shalott

Her broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd,  
On burnish'd harness war-horse trod,  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His corselet curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
'Twas her, 'twas she by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot

Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side.  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott

## PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complain-

ing,  
Heavily the lowly raining  
Over tower'd Camelot,  
Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left aloft,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot  
And at the closing of the day  
She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chant'd loudly, chant'd lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot

For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot

Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name  
*The Lady of Shalott*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer,  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face,  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.'

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house thro' all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright  
 But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
 And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
 To left and right, and made appear  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear  
 And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
 'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'  
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn'

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she,  
 Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
 To help me of my weary load'  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face  
 'Is this the form,' she made her  
 moan,  
 'That won his praises night and  
 morn?'

And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake  
 alone,  
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming salt,  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee deep in mountain  
 grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,

And runlets babbling down the glen  
 She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
 And murmuring, 'as at night and  
 morn,  
 She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream  
 She felt he was and was not there  
 She woke the bubble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Sbrank one sick willow sere and small  
 The river bed was dusty-white,  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall  
 She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or morn,  
 'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
 Live forgotten and die forlorn'

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be  
 true,

To what is loveliest upon earth'  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say  
 'But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore'  
 'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,  
 'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
 Is this the end to be left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
 'But thou shalt be alone no more'  
 And flaming downward over all  
 From heat to heat the dry decreased,  
 And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall  
 'The day to night,' she made her  
 moan,  
 'The day to night, the night to  
 morn,  
 And day and night I am left alone  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
 There came a sound as of the sea,

Riel ward the lattice blind she flung,  
 And lein'd upon the balcony  
 There all in spices rosy bright  
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
 And deem'ing thro' the silent spheres  
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
 And weep'g then she made her moan,  
 'The night comes on that I know's not  
 morn,  
 When I shall cease to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn'

## THE TWO VOICES

A still small voice spake unto me,  
 'Thou art so full of misery,  
 Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said  
 'Let me not rest in endless shade  
 What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply .  
 'To-day I saw the arched sky  
 Come from the wells where he did lie

'An inner triplice rent the veil  
 Of his old heaven from head to tail  
 Came out clear plates of sapphire mail

'He dried his wings like grass as they grew,  
 Thro' crows and peacocks wet with dew  
 A living fish of light he flew'

I said, 'When first the world began,  
 Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
 And in the sixth she moulded man

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
 Proportion, and, above the rest,  
 Dominion in the head and breast'

There'o the silent voice replied,  
 'Self-blinded are you by your pride  
 Look up thro' night the world is wide

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
 That in a boundless universe  
 Is boundless better, boundless worse

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
 Could find no stretchier than his peers  
 In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind  
 'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
 Yet is there plenty of the kind'

Then did my response clearer fall  
 'No compound of this earthly ball  
 Is like another, all in all'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;  
 'Good soul' suppose I grant it thee,  
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
 When thy peculiar difference  
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,  
 But my full heart, that work'd below,  
 Run'd thro' my sight its overflow

Again the voice spake unto me  
 'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
 Surely 'twere better not to be

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
 Nor any trun of reason keep  
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep

I said, 'The years with change advance  
 If I make dark my countenance,  
 I shut my life from happier chance

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
 Ev'n yet' But he 'What drug can make  
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
 That all about the thorn will blow  
 In tufts of rosy tinted snow,

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
 Still moving after truth long sought,  
 Will learn new things when I am not'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
 Sooner or later, will gray prime  
 Make thy grass hour with early rime

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
 Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
 Would sweep the tracts of day and night

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
 The surzy prickly fire the dells,  
 The foxglove cluster dappled bells'

I said that 'all the years invent,  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Fore-run thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite

'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind'

I said, 'When I am gone away,  
"He dared not tarry," men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die

'Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn sheaf

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride'

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I pruned and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung

'I sung the joyful Psalm clear,  
And, sitting, burn'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of woe,  
And reach the law within the law

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self appraise,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown,

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war song thrill his ears

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud  
It was the stirring of the blood

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the  
    fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall  
There is one remedy for all

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pun,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were run

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth  
So were thy labour little-worth

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade,

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Numed man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon

'Cry, faint not either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn

'Cry, faint not, climb the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As o'er rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now  
Look up, the fold is on her brow

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
    strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels Cease to wail and brawl'  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?  
There is one remedy for all'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream,

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire

'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised  
    with stones

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face'

The sullen answer slid betwixt  
'Not that the grounds of hope were  
    fix'd,

The elements were kindlier mix'd'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence

'For I go, weak from suffering here  
Naked I go, and void of cheer  
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died,  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?  
Or answer should one press his hands?  
He answers not, nor understands

'His palms are folded on his breast  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest

'His lips are very mild and meek  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame

'He will not hear the north wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter runs that beat his grave

'High up the vapours fold and swim  
About him broods the twilight dim  
The place he knew forgetteth him'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead

'The sap dries up the plant declines,  
A deeper tale my heart divines  
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

'I found him when my years were few,  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew

'From grave to grave the shadow crept—  
In her still place the morning wept.  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head.  
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead"

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heart of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the rarest gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly  
His heart foretold a mystery  
He names the name Eternity

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find  
He sows himself on every wind

'He seems to hear a Heavenly I friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

'He knows a business in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
good,  
He may not do the thing he would

'Heaven opens inward, chasms run,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn

'Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve  
Assurance only breeds resolve'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pasture made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again

'Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth !'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest,  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again

'So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ,

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
night ,

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot,  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not

'And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own maternal prime ?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here,  
Of something done, I know not where,  
Such as no language may declare '

The still voice laugh'd 'I talk,' said he,  
'Not with thy dreams Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality '

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant,  
More life, and fuller, that I want '

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn '



And I rose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal

On to God's house the people prest  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat

I blest them, and they wander'd on  
I spoke, but answer came there none  
The dull and bitter voice was gone

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver clear,  
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
'I see the end, and know the good

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes

Such seem'd the whisper at my side  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?'

I cried  
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied

So heavenly toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers

I wonder'd, while I paced along  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong,

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvel'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought,

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that I new him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder char I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole  
His memory scarce can make me sad

Yet fill my glass give me one kiss  
My own sweet Alice, we must die  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by

There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self same day

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of  
pain

Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan,  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream

Or from the bridge I learn'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue,  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die,  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye,  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright—  
Such eyes ' I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping  
wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below,

I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly flower'd slope

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill,  
And 'by that lump,' I thought, 'she sits'  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits  
'O that I were beside her now'

O will she answer if I call?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin,  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within,  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind

At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with  
my,

Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day,  
And so it was—half-sly, half shy,  
You would, and would not, little one!  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher,  
And I was young—too young to wed  
'Yet must I love her for your sake,  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spoke

And down I went to fetch my bride  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease,  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please  
I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well,  
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,  
I kiss'd away before they fell

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see,  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me,  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd your heart to heart

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles in her ear  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart

So sing that other song I made,  
Half anger'd with my happy lot,  
The dry, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns rise and set  
Many a chance the years beget  
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so

Love is hurt with jar and fret  
Love is made a vague regret  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit lingers yet.  
What is love? for we forget  
Ah, no! no!

I look thro' mine eyes with thine True  
wife,

Round my true heart thine arms entwined  
My other dearer life in life,

Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
My those kind eyes for ever dwell!  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
well

Yet tears they shed - they had their part  
Of sorrow for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before,  
Although the loss had brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee  
But that God bless thee, dear—who  
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds,  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,

And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless Let us go

## FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love! Owithering might!  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, purch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers  
I roll'd among the tender flowers  
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth,  
I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south

Last night, when some one spoke his  
name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame  
O Love, O fire! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and higher  
The skies stoop down in their desire,  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,

Droops blinded with his shining eye  
 I *will* possess him or will die  
 I will grow round him in his place,  
 Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
 Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace

### CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills  
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the  
 glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine  
 to pine,  
 And lingers, slowly drawn On either  
 hand  
 The lawns and meadow ledges midway  
 down  
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them  
 roars  
 The long brook falling thro' the cloy'n  
 ravine  
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
 Behind the valley topmost Gargyrus  
 Stands up and takes the morning but in  
 front  
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas

Hither came at noon  
 Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
 her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with  
 vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the mountain  
 shade

Sloped downward to her seat from the  
 upper cliff

'O mother Ida, many fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are  
 dead.

The purple flower droops the golden bee

Is lily cradled I alone awake  
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are  
 dim,  
 And I am all awary of my life

'O mother Ida, many fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 Hear me, O I wish, hear me, O Hills, O  
 Crags

That house the cold crown'd snake ' O  
 mountain brook,  
 I am the daughter of a River God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
 A cloud that gather'd shape for it may be  
 That, while I speak of it a little while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe

'O mother Ida, many fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 I waited underneath the drowning hills,  
 Aloft the mountain town was dewy-dark,  
 And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine  
 Beautiful Paris, evil hearted Paris,  
 Leading a jet black goat white horn'd,  
 white hooved,  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 Far off the torrent call'd me from the cleft  
 Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow With down  
 dropt eyes

I sat alone white breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved, a leopard  
 skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny  
 hair

Cluster'd about his temples like a God's  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam bow  
 brightens

When the wind blows the foam, and all  
 my heart

Went forth to embrace him coming ere  
 he came

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
 white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech

Came down upon my heart

"My own Ænone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingrains

'For the most fair,' would seem to award  
it thine,

As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married  
brows "

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added "This was cast upon the  
board,

When all the full faced presence of the  
Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom  
'twere due

But light-foot Iris brought it yester eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire Here comes to dry,  
Fallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest Thou, within the  
cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbelied, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods "

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
It was the deep midnoon one silvery  
cloud

Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen Then to the bower  
they came,

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded  
bower,

And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,

Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and  
vine,

This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro'  
and thio'

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and  
learn'd

Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom

Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that  
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue

Wherewith to embellish state, "from  
many a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
with corn,

Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore  
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax  
and toll,

From many an inland town and haven  
large,

Must-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
citadel

In glassy bays among her tallest towers "

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die  
Still she spake on and still she spake of  
power,

"Which in all action is the end of all,  
Power fitted to the season, wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neigh-  
bour crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre staff Such boon  
from me,

From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee  
king-born,

A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men,  
in power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy "

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought  
 of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit, but Pallas where she  
 stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
 limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen headed  
 spear  
 Upon her purely shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest  
 eye  
 Over her snow cold breast and angry  
 cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made  
 reply

"Self reverence, self knowledge, self  
 control,  
 These three alone lend life to sovereign  
 power  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncill'd for) but to live by  
 law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear,  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence"

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 Again she said "I woo thee not with  
 gifts  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me furest

Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self profit, oh! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to  
 thee,

So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
 God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full grown  
 will,

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom"

'Here she ceased,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O  
 Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, & so is met

'O mother Ida many fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new bathed in Paphian  
 valls,

With rosy slender finger bled ward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her  
 deep hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder from the violet her light  
 foot

Shone rosy-white and o'er her rounded  
 form

Between the shadows of the vine bunches  
 Flashed the glowing insights, as she  
 moved

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eye,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise  
 thee

The furest and most loving wife in  
 Greece."

She spoke and laugh'd I shut my sight  
 for fear

But when I look'd, Paris had raised his  
 arm,

And I beheld great Hera's angry eye,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower,  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die  
 Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fur?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand  
 times

Methinks I must be fur, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton yard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful  
 tail

Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
 loving is she?

Alas! my mother's shepherd, that my arms  
Were wound at, and then, and my hot lip  
press'd  
Close, close to thine in that quiet falling  
dew  
Of frosty kisses, that is Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simons

'O mother, hear me yet before I die  
They came, they eat away my tender  
places  
My tell tale pain, my y waxes the  
crazy heart  
High on terrible forge at will between  
The snowy past and snow white future.  
Porter and callos bright--from I erith  
White dust my heart, I see in the  
a d storm  
The further, more come to me, while  
I sit

Low in the valley Never, never more  
Shall I see the one who the I erith, my  
Sweet thro' thorn; never see them over-  
head  
With narrow moon-lit cups of silver cloud,  
Between the loud scream and the trem-  
bling star

'O mother, hear me yet before I die  
I wish that I were here in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the  
glory,  
Or the dry thud, as I could meet with a  
bar  
The Abominable that uninvited came  
In of the fair Pelian tongue-hill,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And heed this change, that I might speak  
my mind,  
And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
men

'O mother, hear me yet before I die  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,  
In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this  
stone?

Se'd it with kisses? water'd it with  
tears?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
O happy Heaven, how earnest thou see my  
face?  
O happy earth, how earnest thou bear my  
weight?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-flouring  
cloud,  
To be sure enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die  
Thou's highest heav'n on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids let me die

'O mother, hear me yet before I die  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and  
more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the in  
most hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool I dimly see  
My far off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Lest it is born her child!—a shudder comes  
Across me never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die  
Hear me, O earth I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to  
me  
Welling the cold and starless road of  
Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman I will rise and  
go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Kings ever in her ears of armed men  
What this may be I know not, but I  
know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and  
day,  
All earth and air seem only burning  
fire.'



## THE SISTERS

We were two daughters of one race  
She was the fairest in the face

The wind is blowing in turret and tree  
They were together, and she fell,  
Therefore revenge became me well  
O the Earl was fair to see!

She died she went to burning flame  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree  
Whole weeks and months, and early and  
late,  
To win his love I lay in wait  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast, I bad him come,  
I won his love, I brought him home  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast  
The wind is raging in turret and tree  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night  
I made my dagger sharp and bright  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,

A sinful soul posse's'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)  
And Knowledge for its beauty, or if  
Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are  
three sisters

That do, upon each other, friends to  
man,

Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears  
And he that shuts Love out, his turn shall  
be

Shut out from Love, and on her threshold  
lie

Howling in outer darkness Not for this  
Was common clay taken from the common  
earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with the  
tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man

## THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell  
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well'

A huge crag platform, smooth as burnish'd  
brass

I chose The ringed ramparts bright  
From level meadow bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light

Thereon I built it firm Of ledge or  
shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there

And 'while the world runs round and  
round,' I said,

'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast  
shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring'

To which my soul made answer readily  
 'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
 So royal rich and wide'

\* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and  
 South and North,  
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
 A flood of fountain foam

And round the cool green courts there  
 ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
 That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where the  
 sky  
 Dipt down to sea and sands

From those four jets four currents in one  
 swell

Across the mountain stream'd below  
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
 Lit up a torrent-bow

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
 A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
 From out a golden cup

So that she thought, 'And who shall  
 gaze upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,  
 While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
 And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never  
 fail'd,

And, while days sank or mounted higher,  
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
 Burnt like a fringe of fire

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
 and traced,

Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
 From shadow'd grottoes of arches interlaced,  
 And tipt with frost-like spires

\* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
 That over vaulted grateful gloom,  
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
 did pass,  
 Well-pleased, from room to room

Full of great rooms and small the palace  
 stood,

All various, each a perfect whole  
 From living Nature, fit for every mood  
 And change of my still soul

For some were hung with arras green  
 and blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter  
 blew  
 His wreathed bugle-horn

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of  
 sand,

And some one pacing there alone,  
 Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
 Lit with a low large moon

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
 waves

You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
 And roar rock thwarted under bellowing  
 caves,  
 Beneath the windy wall

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
 low,  
 With shadow-streaks of run

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil  
 In front they bound the sheaves Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind

And one a foreground black with stones  
 and slags,

Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the  
 scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire

And one, an English home—gray twi-  
light pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order  
stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was  
there

Not less than truth design'd

\* \* \* \*

Or the maid mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny warm,  
Beneath branch work of costly sardonyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm

Or in a clear wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St Cecily.  
An angel look'd at her

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Hours bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot fall, ere he saw  
The wood nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne  
From one hand droop'd a crocus one  
hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else such'd Ganyemed, in rosy thigh  
Half buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town

Nor these alone but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Creative mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself was there,  
Not less than life, design'd

\* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bell,  
that swung,

Moved of themselves, with silver sound,  
And with choice paintings of wise men I  
hung  
The royal arms round

For there was Milton his hierarch strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild,  
And there the world worn Dante grasp'd  
his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled

And there the Ionian father of the race,  
A million wrinkles carved his old age;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin

Above, the fur hall ceiling stretch'd set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and  
stings,  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings.

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or  
bind

All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man  
declined,  
And trusted any cure

But over these she trod : and those great  
bells

Began to chime. She took her throne  
She sat betwixt the shining Ornels,  
To sing her songs alone

And thro' the topmost Ornels' coloured  
frame

Two godlike faces gazed below,  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know

And all those names, that in their motion  
were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change.  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd  
fair

In diverse raiment strange

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,  
arose

Rivers of melodies

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
song

Throb thro' the ribbed stone -

Singing and murmuring in her fervent  
mirth,

Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
earth,

Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself ' All these are  
mine,

And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me ' She—when young night  
divine

Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—

Lit light in wreaths and madams,

And pure quintessences of precious oils

In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven, and clapt her hands  
and cried,

' I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

' O all things fair to sate my various eyes '  
O shapes and hues that please me well '  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

' O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves  
of swine  
That range on yonder plain

' In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and  
sleep,  
And oft some brunless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep '

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate,  
And at the last she said

' I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all '

\* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn  
mirth,  
And intellectual throne

And so she throve and prosper'd so  
three years

She prosper'd on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his  
ears,

Struck thro' with pangs of hell

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever he bare  
The abyssal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair

When she would think, wher'er she  
turn'd her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was  
born

Scorn of herself, again, from out that  
mood

Laughter at her self scorn

'What! is not this my place of strength,'  
she said,

'My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid

Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes, and unawares  
On white eyed phantasms weeping tears  
of blood,

And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
flame,

And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three months old at noon she  
came,

That stood against the wall

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my  
soul,

'Mid onward sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of  
sand,

Left on the shore, that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from  
the land

Their moon led waters white

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd

'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone  
hall,

'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of  
this world

One deep, deep silence all'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,

In wrapt tenfold in slothful shame,

Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name.

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footstep, fall

As in strange lands a traveller walking  
slow,

In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon rise hears the low  
Morn of an unknown set,

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep  
cry

Of great wild beasts, then thinketh, 'I  
have found  
A new land, but I die'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within  
There comes no murmur of reply  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away  
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
'Where I may mourn and pray

'Yet put I not down my palace towers,  
that are  
So highly, I so safely built  
Perchance I may return with others there  
Where I have purged my guilt'

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime ere you went to town  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired  
The daughter of a hundred evils  
You are not one to be desired

Lady Clara Vere de Vere  
I know you proud to bear your name  
Your pride is yet no mate for name  
Too proud to care from whence I came  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that doats on truer charms  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats of arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meet or pupil you must find,  
For wert you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind  
You sought to prove how I could love  
And my disdain is my reply  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head  
Not thrice your branching limes have  
blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead  
Oh your sweet eyes your low replies  
A great enchantress you may be,  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She hid the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear,  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall  
The guilt of blood is at your door  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the charms of long descent.  
How'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is worried of the rolling hours  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must pry such pranks as  
these

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pry Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

YOU must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
 To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New year,  
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine  
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline  
 But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,  
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
 If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break  
 But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
 But Robin leaping on the bridge beneath the hazel tree?  
 He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him ye t'rdy,  
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
 And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light  
 They call me cruel hearted, but I care not what they say,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be  
 They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?  
 There's many a bolder lad 'll woo me any summer day,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
 And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen,  
 For the shepherd lads on every side 'll come from far away,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
 And by the meadow trenches blow the fust sweet eud oo flowers,  
 And the wild marsh marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow grass,  
 And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;  
 There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

All the valley, mother, 'll be fresh and green and still,  
 And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
 And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'll merrily glance and play,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year  
To-morrow 'll be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year  
It is the last New year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me

To night I saw the sun set he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree

Last May we made a crown of flowers we had a merry day,  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May,  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops

There's not a flower on all the hills the frost is on the pane  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'll come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave

Upon the chancel cismment, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'll shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night,  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now,  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;



Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting place;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face,  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door,  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been

She'll find my garden tools upon the granary floor  
Let her take 'em they're hers I shall never garden more  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to trim the rosebush that I see  
About the parlour window and the box of mignonette

Goodnight, sweet mother call me before the day is born  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn,  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New Year  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear

### CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am,  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the slates,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release,  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in!  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call,  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all,  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear,  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here,  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said,  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind

But you were sleeping, and I said, 'It's not for them it's mine.'  
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars

So now I think my time is near I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret,  
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife,  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow,  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—  
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—  
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE' he said, and pointed toward  
the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shore  
ward soon'

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon  
All round the coast the languid air did  
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary  
dream

Full faced above the valley stood the  
moon,

And like a downward smoke, the slender  
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall  
did seem

A land of streams! some, like a down-  
ward smoke,

Slow dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did  
go,

And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below  
They saw the gleaming river seaward  
flow

From the inner land far off, three  
mountain tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd and, dew'd with  
showery drops,

Up clomb the shadowy pine above the  
woven copse

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West thro' mountain clefts  
the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding  
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale,  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same!

And round about the keel with faces  
pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters  
came

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they  
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores, and if his fellow spoke,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave,

And deep asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart  
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow  
sand,

Between the sun and moon upon the  
shore,

And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave, but ever-  
more

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren  
forn

Then some one said, 'We will return no  
more,'

And all at once they sang, 'Our island  
home

Is far beyond the wave, we will no longer  
roam'

## CHORIC SONG.

## I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls

Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass,  
Music that gentler on the spirit lies,  
Than tur'd eyelids upon tur'd eyes,  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from  
the blissful skies

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers  
weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep

## II.

Why are we writhed upon with leaviness,  
And stern consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest—why should we toil  
alone?

We only, to be sure, are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from our forms to another thrown  
Nor ever find our way;

And cease from our moan,  
Nor sleep ever? Or is slumber's joy  
balm?

Nor hear we what the other spirit says,  
'There is no joy but in toil.'  
Why should we ever toil, in toil and  
creed of things?

## III

Lo! in the heart of the west,  
The folded leaf is torn from out the bud  
With a rose upon the branch, and there  
Grows a new bud, and it is no care,  
So we might as well stand in the moon  
Nigh the dew-fall, and a ring of dew  
Fall, and forth from the air  
Lo! a vector'd rain the summer lull,  
The full-grown apple, the golden yellow,  
Drop on a leaf, and a night  
Ad its shadowed branch of day,  
The flower falls in its place,  
Ripens and falls, and falls, and hath no  
rest.

Fast rooted in the fruitful soil

## IV

Hateful is the dark blue day,  
Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea  
Death is the end of life, why, why  
Should life and labor be?

Let us alone—sure drive us onward fast,  
And in a hole while our lips are dumb  
Let us alone—What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portion and parcels of the dreadful Past  
Let us alone—What pleasure can we  
have

To war with evil? Is there any peace

In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward  
the grave

In silence, ripen, fall and cease  
Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
or dreamful ease

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the down  
ward stream,  
With half shut eyes ever to seem  
I falling asleep in a half dream!

To dream and dream, like yonder amber  
light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on  
the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech,  
Listening the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the cringing ripples on the  
beach,

And tender curving lines of creamy spray,  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly

To the influence of mild-minded melan-  
choly

To run and brood and live again in  
memory

With those old faces of our infancy  
Heard over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an  
urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the lost embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears—but all hath  
suffer'd change

For surely now our household hearths are  
cold

Our sons inherit us—our looks are  
strange

And we should come like ghosts to trouble  
joy

Or else the island princes over bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel  
sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things

Is there confusion in the little isle?

Let what is broken so remain

The Gods are hard to reconcile  
 'Tis hard to settle order once agun  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the  
 pilot stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm urs lull us,  
 blowing lowly)  
 With half dropt eyelid still,  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing  
 slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick twined  
 vine—  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water  
 falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath  
 divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far off sparkling  
 brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
 beneath the pine

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek  
 All day the wind breathes low with  
 mellow tone  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the  
 yellow Lotos dust is blown  
 We have had enough of action, and of  
 motion we,  
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
 when the surge was seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted  
 his foam fountains in the sea.  
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
 an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos land to live and lie  
 reclined  
 On the hills like Gods together, careless  
 of mankind

For they lie beside their nectar, and the  
 bolts are hurl'd  
 Far below them in the valleys, and the  
 clouds are lightly curl'd  
 Round their golden houses, girdled with  
 the gleaming world  
 Where they smile in secret, looking over  
 wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,  
 roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and  
 sinking ships, and praying hands.  
 But they smile, they find a music centred  
 in a doleful song  
 Sterning up, a lamentation and an ancient  
 tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little marning tho' the  
 words are strong,  
 Chanted from an ill used race of men  
 that cleave the soil,  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with  
 enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little ducs of wheat, and  
 wine and oil,  
 Till they perish and they suffer—some,  
 'tis whisper'd—down in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian  
 valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
 asphodel  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
 than toil, the shore  
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind  
 and wave and oar,  
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will  
 not wander more

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
 'The Legend of Good Women,' long ago  
 Sung by the morning star of song, who  
 made

His music heard below,

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
 sweet breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
 With sounds that echo still

And, for a while, the knowledge of his  
art

Held me above the subject, as strong  
gales

Held swollen clouds from raining, tho'  
my heart,

Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears In  
every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death

Those far-renowned brides of ancient  
song

Peopled the hollow dark, like burning  
stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and  
wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging  
hoofs ;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanctu-  
aries ,

And forms that pass'd at windows and on  
roofs

Of marble palaces ,

Corpses across the threshold , heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ,  
Lances in ambush set ,

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts

That run before the fluttering tongues  
of fire ,

White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and  
masts,

And ever climbing higher ,

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen  
plates,

Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers  
woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron  
grates,

And hush'd seraglios

So shape chased shape as swift as, when  
to land

Bluster the winds and tides the self-same  
way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level  
sand,

Torn from the fringe of spray

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove

to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along  
the brain,

And flushes all the cheek

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,

That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ,  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing  
thought

Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and  
did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,  
and brought

Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood fresh-wash'd in coolest  
dew

The maiden splendours of the morningstar  
Shook in the steadfast blue

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and  
lean

Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with

clearest green,

New from its silken sheath

The dim red morn had died, her journey  
done,

And with dead lips smiled at the twi  
light plain,

Half fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ,

Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest      Growths of jasmine  
     turn'd  
 Their humid arms fastooning tree to  
 tree,  
 And at the root thro' lush green grasses  
     burn'd  
 The red anemone

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I  
     knew  
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
 On those long, rank, dark wood walls  
     drench'd in dew  
 Leading from lawn to lawn

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and  
     frame

The times when I remember to have been  
 Joyful and free from blame

And from within me a clear under tone  
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unbliss-  
     ful clime,

'Pass freely thro' the wood is all thine  
     own,  
 Until the end of time'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
 Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing  
     there,

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
 And most divinely fair

Her loveliness with shame and with sur-  
     prise

Froze my swift speech she turning on  
 my face

The star like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
 Spoke slowly in her place

'I had great beauty ask thou not my  
     name

No one can be more wise than destiny  
 Many drew swords and died      Where'er  
     I came

I brought calamity'

'No marvel, sovereign lady in fair field  
 Myself for such a face had boldly died,'  
 I answer'd free, and turning I appeal'd  
 To one that stood beside

But she, with aie' and scornful look sauntered,  
 To her full height her stately stature  
     drew,

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with  
     a curse

This woman, for the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
 Which men call'd Hades in those iron  
     years

My faith held fast and up on his face,  
 I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak, my voice was  
 thick with sigh-

As in a dream. Dumb I could decay  
 The stern black berried limbs with wolf  
     in prey,

Waiting to see me die

'The high masts shiel'd as they lay aloft,  
 The crowds, the temple, the ward, and  
     the shore.

The bright death of a hero at the victor's  
     throat,

Touch'd, and I knew no more'

Whereto the others with a downward brow

'I would the white cold heavy plung-  
     ing form,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep  
     below,

Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full voice sank thro' the silence  
     drear,

As thunder drop fall on a sleeping sea

Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come  
     here,

That I may look on thee'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery tree,  
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;

A queen, with swart cheeks and bold  
     black eyes,

Brow-bound with burning gold

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began

'I govern'd men by change, and so I  
     sway'd

All moods 'Tis long since I have seen  
     a man

Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow  
I have no men to govern in this wood.  
That makes my only woe

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not  
bend  
One will, nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar Prythee,  
friend,  
Where is Mark Antony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode  
sublime  
On Fortune's neck we sat as God by  
God  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit  
Lamps, hush out-burn'd Canopus O  
my life  
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's  
alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony, &  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms  
Contented there to die!

'And there he died and when I heard  
my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook  
my fear  
Of the other. with a worm I balk'd his  
fame  
What else was left? look here!

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a  
laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite)

'I died a Queen The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows.

A name for ever!—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse' ✓

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight,  
Because with sudden motion from the  
ground  
She roused her piercing orbs, and fill'd with  
light  
The interval of sound

Still with their fires Love tip'd his keenest  
darts,  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings

Slowly, my sense undazzled Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the  
lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and  
soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the  
dell,  
Far-herd beneath the moon

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep blue gloom with  
beams divine  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall  
the dell  
With spires of silver shine

As one that museth where broad sunshine  
laxes  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the  
door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor



Within and anthem sung, is charm'd and  
tied

To where he stands,—so stood I when  
that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow,

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure, as when she went  
along

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome  
light,

With tumbrel and with song

My words leapt forth 'Heaven heads'  
the count of crimes

With that wild oath 'She render'd  
answer high

'Not so, nor once alone, a thousand times  
I would be born and die

'Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root

Creeps to the garden water-pipes be-  
neath,

Feeding the flower, but ere my flower  
to fruit

Changed, I was ripe for death

'My God, my land, my father—these did  
move

Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
gave,

Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of  
love

Down to a silent grave

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew  
boy

Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among

The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all  
joy,

Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal

bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
glow

Beneath the battled tower

'The light white cloud swam over us,  
Anon

We heard the lion roaring from his den,  
We saw the large white stars rise one by  
ore,

Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying  
flame,

And thunder on the everlasting hills  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became

A solemn scorn of ills

'When the next moon was roll'd into  
the sky,

Strength came to me that equall'd my  
desire

How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire'

'It comforts me in this one thought to  
dwell,

That I subdued me to my father's will,  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still

'Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth ' Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her

She lock'd her lips she left me where I  
stood

'Glory to God,' she sang, and past  
afar,

Thridding the sombre boshage of the wood,  
Toward the morning star

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his  
head,

When midnight bells cease ringing sud-  
denly,

And the old year is dead

'Alas ' alas ' a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me 'Turn and look  
on me

I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be

Would I had been some maiden coarse  
and poor !

O me, that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night !

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and  
trust

To whom the Egyptian - 'O, you  
timely died !

You should have clung to Fulvius's wist,  
and thrust

The dagger thro' her side !

With that sharp sound the white dawn's  
creeping beams,

Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep The capt'ain of my  
dreams

Ruled in the eastern sky

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the  
dark,

Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last  
trance

Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of  
Arc,

A light of ancient France ,

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish  
Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
her king,

Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
breath,

Sweet as new buds in Spring

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
sleep

To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight With what  
dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams  
again !

But no two dreams are like

As when a soul laments, which hath been  
blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
years,

In yearnings that can never be express'd  
By signs or groans or tears ,

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest  
art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat

## THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well  
While all the neighbours shoot thee  
round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine, the range of lawn and  
park

The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when  
young

And in the sultry garden squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hourse  
As when a hawk hawks his wares

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are  
new,

Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD  
YEAR

FULL knee deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sigh-  
ing

Toll ye the church bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a dying  
Old year, you must not die,  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still he doth not move  
He will not see the dawn of day  
He hath no other life above  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away  
Old year, you must not go,  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim,  
A jollier year we shall not see  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me  
Old year, you shall not die,  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post haste,  
But he'll be dead before  
Every one for his own  
The night is starry and cold, my  
friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold,  
my friend,  
Comes up to take his own

How hard he breathes! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro  
The cricket chirps the light burns low  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you  
What is it we can do for you?  
Speak out before you die

His face is growing sharp and thin  
Alack! our friend is gone  
Close up his eyes tie up his chin  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door  
There's a new foot on the floor, my  
friend  
And a new face at the door, my  
friend,  
A new face at the door

## TO J S

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are  
nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost  
Those we love first are taken first

God gives us love Something to love  
He lends us, but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it thrives  
Falls off, and love is left alone

This is the curse of time Alas!  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd,  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
pass,  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more Two years his chair is  
seen  
Empty before us That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
 Rose with you thro' a little arc  
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
 Shot on the sudden into dark

I knew your brother his mute dust  
 I honour and his living worth  
 A man more pure and bold and just  
 Was never born into the earth

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep  
 Great Nature is more wise than I  
 I will not tell you not to weep

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
 I will not even preach to you,  
 'Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
 pain'

Let Grief be her own mistress still  
 She loveth her own anguish deep  
 More than much pleasure Let her will  
 Be done—to weep or not to weep

I will not say, 'God's ordinance  
 Of Death is blown in every wind,'  
 For that is not a common chance  
 That takes away a noble mind

His memory long will live alone  
 In all our hearts, as mournful light  
 That broods above the fallen sun,  
 And dwells in heaven half the night

'Can solace' Memory standing near  
 Cast down her eyes, and in her  
 throat

Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
 Dropt on the letters as I wrote

I wrote I know not what In truth,  
 How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
 Who miss the brother of your youth?  
 Yet something I did wish to say

For he too was a friend to me  
 Both are my friends, and my true  
 breast

Bleedeth for both, yet it may be  
 That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
 make  
 Grief more. 'I were better I should  
 cease

Although myself could almost take  
 The place of him that sleeps in  
 peace

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace  
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
 While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
 And the great ages onward roll

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet  
 Nothing comes to thee new or strange  
 Sleep full of rest from head to feet,  
 Lie still, dry dust, secure of change

## ON A MOURNER

## I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
 Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
 Counts nothing that she meets with  
 base,  
 But lives and loves in every place,

## II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
 The swamp, where humm'd the drop  
 ping snipe,  
 With moss and braided marsh-pipe,

## III

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
 Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
 Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
 Put forth and feel a gladder clime'

## IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
 Going before to some far shrine,  
 Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
 Till all thy life one way incline  
 With one wide Will that closes thine

## V

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wand forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born

## VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII

Promising empire, such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete

YOU ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes

A man may speak the thing he will,

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens  
down

From precedent to precedent

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute,

Tho' Power should make from land to  
land

The name of Britain trebly great —  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet wait me from the harbour mouth,  
Wild and I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet  
Above her shook the starry lights  
She heard the torrents meet

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self gather'd in her prophet mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind

Then stopt she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle altar grazing down,  
Who, God like, grasps the triple fork,  
And, King like, wears the crown

Her open eyes desire the truth  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears,

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,

Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes'

LOVE thou thy land, with love far brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natives, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls

But pimper not a hasty time,  
Nor led with crude imaginings  
The hard, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for  
day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light

Make knowledge circle with the winds,  
But let her herald, Reverence, sit  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds

Watch what main currents draw the years  
Cut Prejudice against the grain  
But gentle words are always gain  
Regard the weakness of thy peers

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension neither count on praise  
It grows to perdition after days  
Nor deal in watch words overmuch

Not clinging to some ancient law,  
Nor master'd by some modern term,  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm  
And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that working strongly,  
binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy

A saving hard to shape in act,  
For all the past of time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Learning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school,  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark,  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord rise the rising wind,

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head,  
To shame the boist so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood.

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like  
Peace,

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
 Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
 That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that brole  
 From either side, nor veil his eyes  
 And if some dreadful need should rise  
 Would strike, and firmly, and one strolc

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we bear blossom of the dead,  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay

### ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
 To rule by land and sea,  
 Strong mother of a Lion line,  
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
 Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat  
 Those men thine arms withstood,  
 Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,  
 And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
 Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
 Lift up thy rocky face,  
 And shatter, when the storms are black,  
 In many a streaming torrent brack,  
 The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
 The growing world assume,  
 Thy work is thine—The single note  
 From that deep chord which Hampden  
 smote  
 Will vibrate to the doom

### THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
 Her rags scarce held together,  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather

He held a gun up on his arm,  
 He utter'd rhyme and riddle,  
 'Here, take the gun, and keep you  
 warm,  
 It is a stormy morning

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
 A goose—it was no great matter  
 The goose let fall a goodly egg  
 With cackle and with clatter

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
 puff,  
 And ran to tell her neighbours,  
 And bless'd herself, or I should have said,  
 And rested from her labour

And feeding long, and lying soft,  
 Grew plump and comfortable,  
 Until the grave churchmen's door was closed,  
 The parson could not come to bed

So sitting, served by a man and a maid,  
 She felt her heart grow ponderous  
 But ah! the more the white goose laid  
 It cluck'd and cackled louder

It clatter'd here, it clatter'd there;  
 It stirr'd the old wife's meal;  
 She shifted in her elbow chair,  
 And hurl'd the pen and kettle

'A quinsy choke thy curried nose!  
 Then wax'd her anger stronger  
 'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat  
 I will not bear it longer'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yowl'd the cat,  
 Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gimmer  
 The goose flew this way and flew that,  
 And fill'd the house with clamour

As head and heels upon the floor  
 They floundered all together,  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather

He took the goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd words of scorning,  
 'So keep you cold, or keep you warm  
 It is a stormy mornin'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder

Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger'

## ENGLISH IDYLS

### AND OTHER POEMS

#### THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve,—

The game of forfeits done—the girls all  
kiss'd

Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd . and there we held  
a talk,

How all the old honour had from Christmas  
gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd  
games

In some odd nooks like this , till I, tired  
out

With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,

Where, three times slipping from the  
outer edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze , and half-awake I heard

The parson taking wide and wider  
sweeps,

Now harping on the church - commis-  
sioners,

Now hawking at Geology and schism ,  
Until I woke, and found him settled down

Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little  
left.

And none abroad . there was no anchor,  
none,

To hold by ' Francis, laughing, clapt  
his hand

On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by  
him'

'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail  
bowl'

'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift  
that way

At college but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),

What came of that?' 'You know,' said  
Frank, 'he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books'—

And then to me demanding why? 'Oh,  
sir,

He thought that nothing new was said,  
or else

Something so said 'twas nothing—that a  
truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day  
God knows he has a mint of reasons ask

It pleased me well enough 'Nay, nay,'  
said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,

Nor we those times , and why should any  
man

Remodel models ? these twelve books of  
mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
worth.



Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt '  
 'But I,'  
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from  
 this hearth  
 And have it keep a thing, its use will  
 come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar plum for Holmes '  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a  
 horse  
 That hears the corn bin oven, prick'd a my  
 ears,  
 For I remember'd Everard's college farne  
 When we were Freshmen then at my  
 request  
 He brought it, and the poet little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and  
 aes,  
 Deep chested music, and to this result

### \* MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur then, because his wound  
 was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was  
 full  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere  
 'The sequel of to day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved I think  
 that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were  
 I perish by this people which I made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again  
 To rule once more—but let what will be,  
 be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till morn  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride for thou remem-  
 berest how  
 In those old days, one summer noon, at  
 arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
 derful,  
 Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
 across  
 And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known  
 But now delay not take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle mere  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
 me word '  
 To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
 Yet I thy best will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
 word '  
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
 stept  
 And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
 men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea wind  
 sang  
 Shril, chill, with flakes of foam He,  
 stepping down  
 By zig zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake  
 There drew he forth the brand  
 Excalibur,  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
 moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran  
 forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt

For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he  
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift  
rind,

In yet to throw but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterfags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge

So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag'

To whom replied King Arthur, fume  
and pale

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere

This is a shameful thing for men to lie  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought,

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men

What good should follow this, if this were  
done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to dis-  
obey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he  
does

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this

kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills"

So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence  
But now much honour and much fame  
were lost'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King

Then spake King Arthur, breathing  
heavily

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds'

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me'

Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest left of all my knights

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt,

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the  
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd  
in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere

And lightly went the other to the King

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
done

Speak out what is it thou hast heard, or  
seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
ing him,

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard

'My end draws nigh, 'tis time that I  
were gone

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

And bear me to the margin, yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
die'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eye.

As in a picture Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found  
not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on  
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute So sigh'd

the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,

'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills

He heard the deep behind him, and a  
cry

Before His own thought drove him, like  
a goad

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and

right

The hard black cliff clung 'a round him,  
as he bled

His feet on ju's of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-snutter with the dint of armed  
heels—

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon  
Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were  
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately  
forms

Black stole'd, black hooded, like a dream  
—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and  
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the  
world

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And surest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
load,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
east,

And all his greives and cuisses dash'd  
with drops

On onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd  
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips

So like a shatter'd column lay the King,  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
go ?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes ?

For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is  
dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds'

And slowly answered Arthur from the  
barge

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world

Comfort thyself what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within Himself make pure ! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul More things are  
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of Wherefore,  
let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day  
For what are men better than sheep or  
goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God

But now farewell I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island valley of Avilion,  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy fair with orchard  
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full  
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood

With swarthy webs Long stood Sir  
Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,  
that long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
flared and fell

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with  
sound,

And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!'  
but we

Sat rapt it was the tone with which he  
read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and  
there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothing-  
ness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his  
work,

I know not but we sitting, and I said,  
The cock crew loud, is at that time  
of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn  
Then Francis, muttering like a man  
ill used

'There now—that's nothing,' drew a  
little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd  
log

That sent a blast of sparkle up the flue  
And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under morning shores,  
Point after point, till on to dawn, when  
dreams

Began to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waked with a  
crowd

There came a bark that, blowing forward,  
bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of steepest port, and all the people  
cried,

'Arthur is come again he cannot die  
Then those that stood upon the hills  
behind

Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as  
far,'

And, further inland, voices echo'd—  
'Come

With all good things, and war shall be  
no more'

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard  
indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the  
Christmas morn

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER,

OR, THE PICTURE

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustice from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter, I and he,  
Brothers in Art, a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we  
grew

The fable of the city where we dwell.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules,  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast  
He, by some law that holds in love, and  
draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little,—Juliet,  
she

So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless  
moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
'When will you paint like this?' and I  
replied,

My words were half in earnest, half in  
jest,)

'Tis not your work, but Love's Love,  
unperceived,  
A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made  
those eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of  
March'

And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The Gardener's daughter trust me, after  
that,

You scarce can fail to match his master-  
piece'

And up we rose, and on the spur we went  
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells,  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you  
hear

The windy clanging of the minster clock,  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad  
stream,

That, stir'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd  
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous  
wings

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen, not less among us  
lived

Her fame from lip to lip Who had not  
heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where  
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common  
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of  
her

Grew oratorv Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love A crowd of  
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like  
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul,  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the  
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark  
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn  
And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went

To see her All the land in flowery  
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large  
cloud

Drew downward but all else of heaven  
was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
 And May with me from herd to hiel  
 And now,  
 As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
 The hour just flown, that morn with all  
 its sound,  
 (For those old Mays had thrice the life  
 of these,)  
 Rings in mine ears The steer forgot to  
 grize,  
 And, where the hedge row cuts the  
 pathway, stood,  
 Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
 And loving to his fellows From the  
 woods  
 Came voices of the well contented doves  
 The lark could scarce get out his notes  
 for joy,  
 But shook his song together as he near'd  
 His happy home, the ground To left  
 and right,  
 The cuckoo told his name to all the hills,  
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm,  
 The redcap whistled, and the nightingale  
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day  
 And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said  
 to me,  
 'Hear how the bushes echo' by my life,  
 These birds have joyful thoughts Think  
 you they sing  
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?  
 Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
 And would they praise the heavens for  
 what they have?'  
 And I made answer, 'Were there nothing  
 else  
 For which to praise the heavens but only  
 love,  
 That only love were cause enough for  
 praise'  
 I lightly he laugh'd, as one that read  
 my thought,  
 And on we went, but ere an hour had  
 pass'd,  
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the  
 North,  
 Down which a well worn pathway courted  
 us  
 To one green wicket in a privet hedge,

This, yielding, gave into a grassy wall  
 Thro' crowded lilac umbustimly pruned,  
 And one warm gale, full fed with perfume,  
 blew  
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool  
 The garden stretches southward In the  
 midst  
 A cedar spread his dark green layers of  
 shade  
 The garden glasses glinned and mom  
 ently  
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver light  
 'I justice I said, 'this wonder I kept  
 the house'  
 He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
 He cried, 'I look! look!' Before he ceased  
 I turn'd,  
 And, ere a s'm can wink beheld her there  
 For up the porch there grew an Eastern  
 rose,  
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale  
 had caught,  
 And blown across the walk One arm  
 aloft—  
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the  
 shape—  
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,  
 A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
 Pour'd on one side the shadow of the  
 flowers  
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
 Ah, happy shade—and still went waver-  
 ing down,  
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have  
 danced  
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
 And mix'd with shadows of the common  
 ground'  
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and  
 sunn'd  
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
 And doubled his own warmth against her  
 lips,  
 And on the bounteous wave of such a  
 breast  
 As never pencil drew Half light, half  
 shade,  
 She stood, a sight to make an old man  
 young

So rapt, we near'd the house, but she,  
 a Rose  
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance  
 turn'd  
 Into the world without, till close at hand,  
 And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
 This murmur broke the stillness of that  
 air  
 Which brooded round about her  
 'Ah, one rose,  
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers  
 cull'd,  
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on  
 lips  
 Less exquisite than thine '  
 She look'd but ill  
 Suffused with blushes—neither self-pos-  
 sess'd  
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and  
 that,  
 Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
 And dropt the branch she held, and turn-  
 ing, wound  
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her  
 lips  
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer  
 came,  
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
 And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
 In act to render thanks  
 I, that whole day,  
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there  
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's white  
 star  
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the  
 dusk  
 So home we went, and all the livelong  
 way  
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me  
 'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top  
 of Art  
 You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
 The Titianic Flora Will you match  
 My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,  
 Love,  
 A more ideal Artist he than all '  
 So home I went, but could not sleep  
 for joy,  
 Reading her perfect features in the gloom,

Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
 And shaping faithful record of the glance  
 That graced the giving—such a noise of  
 life  
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
 voice  
 Call'd to me from the years to come, and  
 such  
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
 dark  
 And all that night I heard the watchman  
 peal  
 The sliding season all that night I heard  
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
 hours  
 The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
 O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
 Distilling odours on me as they went  
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East  
 Love at first sight, first-born, and heir  
 to all,  
 Made this night thus Henceforward  
 squall nor storm  
 Could keep me from that Eden where she  
 dwelt  
 Light pretexts drew me, sometimes a  
 Dutch love  
 For tulips, then for roses, moss or musk,  
 To grace my city rooms, or fruits and  
 cream  
 Served in the weeping elm, and more and  
 more  
 A word could bring the colour to my  
 cheek,  
 A thought would fill my eyes with happy  
 dew,  
 Love trebled life within me, and with  
 each  
 The year increased  
 The daughters of the year,  
 One after one, thro' that still garden  
 pass'd,  
 Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
 Danced into light, and died into the  
 shade,  
 And each in passing touch'd with some  
 new grace  
 Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by  
 day,  
 Like one that never can be wholly known,



Her beauty grew, till Autumn brought  
 an hour  
 For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I  
 will,'  
 Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to  
 hold  
 From thence thro' all the worlds but I  
 rose up  
 Full of his bliss, and following her dark  
 eyes  
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
 The wicket gate, and found her standing  
 there

There sat we down upon a garden  
 mound,  
 Two mutually enfolded, Love, the third,  
 Between us, in the circle of his arms  
 Enwound us both, and over many a range  
 Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
 Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
 Reveal'd their shining windows from  
 them clash'd  
 The bells, we listen'd, with the time  
 we play'd,  
 We spoke of other things, we coursed  
 about  
 The subject most at heart, more near and  
 near,  
 Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling  
 round  
 The central wish, until we settled there  
 Then, in that time and place, I spoke  
 to her,  
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
 Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
 Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
 A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved,  
 And in that time and place she answer'd  
 me,  
 And in the compass of three little words,  
 More musical than ever came in one,  
 The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
 Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am  
 thine'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to  
 say  
 That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion? Would you learn  
 at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
 grades

Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
 I had not stud so long to tell you all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with  
 sad eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit brows  
 went by,

And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
 And spake, 'Be wise not easily forgiven  
 Are those, who setting wide the doors that  
 bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
 Let in the day' Here, then, my words  
 have end

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare  
 wells—

Of that which came between, more sweet  
 than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the  
 leaves

That tremble round a nightingale—in  
 sighs

Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utter  
 ance,

Stole from her sister Sorrow Might I  
 not tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
 given,

And vows, where there was never need  
 of vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild  
 leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
 The heavens between their fiery fleeces  
 pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with gleeting  
 stars,

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river  
 shores,

And in the hollows; or as once we met  
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering  
 run

Night slid down one long stream of sigh-  
 ing wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep  
 But this whole hour your eyes have  
 been intent

On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common day  
 This prelude has prepared thee Raise thy soul :  
 Make thine heart ready with thine eyes the time  
 Is come to raise the veil  
 Behold her there,  
 As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
 My first, last love, the idol of my youth,  
 The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
 Now the most blest memory of mine age

### DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
 William and Dora William was his son,  
 And she his niece He often look'd at them,  
 And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife'  
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
 And yearn'd toward William, but the youth, because  
 He had been always with her in the house,  
 Thought not of Dora

Then there came a day  
 When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
 'My son

I married late, but I would wish to see  
 My grandchild on my knees before I die  
 And I have set my heart upon a match  
 Now therefore look to Dora, she is well  
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age  
 She is my brother's daughter he and I  
 Had once hard words, and parted, and he died

In foreign lands, but for his sake I bred  
 His daughter Dora take her for your wife,

For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
 For many years.' But William answer'd short,

'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,  
 I will not marry Dora' Then the old man  
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,  
 and said.

'You will not, boy' you dare to answer thus'

But in my time a father's word was law,  
 And so it shall be now for me Look to it,

Consider, William take a month to think,

And let me have an answer to my wish,  
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,

And never more darken my doors again'  
 But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,

And broke away The more he look'd at her

The less he liked her, and his ways were harsh,

But Dora bore them meekly Then before

The month was out he left his father's house,

And hired himself to work within the fields;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed

A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison  
 Then, when the bells were ringing,  
 Allan call'd

His niece and said 'My girl, I love you well,

But if you speak with him that was my son,

Or change a word with her he calls his wife,

My home is none of yours My will is law'

And Dora promised, being meek She thought,

'It cannot be my uncle's mind will change'

And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William, then distresses came on him,

And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,

Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not

But Dora stored what little she could save,

And sent it them by stealth, nor did they  
know

Who sent it, till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died

Then Dora went to Mary Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and  
thought

Hard things of Dora Dora came and  
said

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
Thus evil came on William at the first  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's  
gone,

And for your sake, the woman that he  
chose,

And for this orphan, I am come to you  
You know there has not been for these  
five years

So full a harvest let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eve  
Among the wheat, that when his heart  
is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's  
gone'

And Dora took the child, and went  
her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies  
grew

Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not, for none of all his  
men

Dare tell him Dora waited with the child,  
And Dora would have risen and gone to  
him,

But her heart fail'd her, and the reapers  
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was  
dark

But when the morrow came, she rose  
and took

The child once more, and sat upon the  
mound,

And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field

He spied her, and he left his men at work,

And came and said 'Where were you  
yesterday?

Whose child is that? What are you doing  
here?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's  
child'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not  
I forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again  
'Do with me as you will, but take the  
child,

And bless him for the sake of him that's  
gone'

And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick  
Got up between you and the woman there  
I must be taught my duty, and by you'  
You knew my word was law, and yet you  
dared

To slight it Well—for I will take the  
boy,

But go you hence, and never see me more'  
So saying, he took the boy that cried  
aloud

And struggled hard The wreath of  
flowers fell

At Dora's feet She bow'd upon her  
hands,

And the boy's cry came to her from the  
field,

More and more distant She bow'd  
down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She  
bow'd down

And wept in secret, and the reapers  
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was  
dark

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and  
stood

Upon the threshold Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora She broke out in  
praise

To God, that help'd her in her widow hood  
And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy,

But, Mary, let me live and work with you  
He says that he will never see me more'

Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on  
thyself

And, now I think, he shall not have the  
boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to  
slight  
His mother, therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him  
home,  
And I will beg of him to take thee back  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one  
house,  
And work for William's child, until he  
grows  
Of age to help us'

So the women kiss'd

Each other, and set out, and reach'd the  
farm

The door was off the latch they peep'd,  
and saw

The boy set up beneath his grandsire's  
knees,

Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the  
cheeks,

Like one that loved him and the lad  
stretch'd out

And babbled for the golden seal, that  
hung

From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the  
fire

Then they came in but when the boy  
beheld

His mother, he cried out to come to her  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said

'O Father!—if you let me call you  
so—

I never came begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child, but now I  
come

For Dora take her back, she loves you  
well

O Sir, when William died, he died at  
peace

With all men, for I ask'd him, and he  
said,

He could not ever ~~the~~ his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife but, Sir, he  
said

That he was wrong to cross his father  
thus

"God bless him!" he said, "and may  
he never know

The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then  
he turn'd

His face and press'd—unhappy that I am!  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for  
you

Will make him hard, and he will learn  
to slight

His father's memory, and take Dora  
back,

And let all this be as it was before'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary There was silence in the room,  
And all at once the old man burst in  
sobs—

'I have been to blame—to blame I  
have kill'd my son

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my  
dear son

May God forgive me!—I have been to  
blame

Kiss me, my children'

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many  
times

And all the man was broken with re-  
morse,

And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold,

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er Wil-  
liam's child

Thinking of William

So those four abode  
Within one house together, and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate,  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and  
not a room

For love or money Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Hum'd like a hive all round the narrow  
quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,

And breathing of the sea 'With all my heart,'  
 Sud Francis 'Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,  
 And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
 To where the bay runs up its latest horn  
 We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
 The flat red granite, so by many a sweep  
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
 The griffin guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all  
 The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
 And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
 With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
 And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine  
 There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
 A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
 Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
 And, half-cut down, a pasty costly-made,  
 Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
 Like fossils of the rock with golden yolks  
 Imbedded and unjellied, last, with these,  
 A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
 Prime, which I knew, and so we sat and eat  
 And talk'd old matters over, who was dead,  
 Who married, who was like to be, and how  
 The races went, and who would rent the hall  
 Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
 This season, glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
 The four-field system, and the price of grain,  
 And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
 And came again together on the kang  
 With heated faces, till he laugh'd aloud,  
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—  
 'Oh' who would fight and march and countermarch,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle field,  
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
 Where no one knows? but let me live my life  
 'Oh' who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
 Fill all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk? but let me live my life  
 'Who'd serve the state? for if I curv'd my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
 I might as well have traced it in the sands,  
 The sea wastes all but let me live my life  
 'Oh' who would love? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea, but let me live my life'  
 He sang his song, and I replied with mine  
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
 His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
 Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
 I set the words, and added names I knew  
 'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me  
 Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine  
 'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm,  
 Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.  
 'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast  
 Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip  
 I go to-night I come to-morrow morn  
 'I go, but I return I would I were  
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me  
 So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
 The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
 My friend, and I, that having where-withal,  
 And in the fallow leisure of my life  
 A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
 Did what I would, but ere the night we rose  
 And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
 In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
 Twilights of my silver, till we reach'd  
 The limit of the hills, and as we sank  
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
 The town was hush'd beneath us lower down  
 The bay was oily calm, the harbour-buoy,  
 Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
 With one green sparkle ever and anon  
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart

## WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John* I'm glad I walk'd How fresh  
 the meadows look  
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
 The whole hill-side was redder than a fox  
 Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
 The turnpike?

*James* Yes

*John* And when does this come by?

*James* The mail? At one o'clock

*John* What is it now?

*James* A quarter to

*John* Whose house is that I see?  
 No, not the County Member's with the cane

Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half

A score of gables

*James* That? Sir Edward Head's  
 But he's abroad the place is to be sold

*John* Oh, his He was not broken

*James* No, sir, he,  
 Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
 That veil'd the world with prejudice, hid  
 his face

From all men, and commercing with  
 himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
 That keeps us all in order more or less—  
 And sick of home went overseas for  
 change

*John* And whither?

*James* Nay, who knows? he's here  
 and there

But let him go, his devil goes with him,  
 As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes

*John* What's that?

*James* You saw the man—on Mon-  
 day, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow, half  
 strands up

And bristles, half has fall'n and made a  
 bridge,

And there he caught the youngster tickling  
 trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin  
 word?—

*Delecto* but his house, for so they say,  
 Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that  
 shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at  
 doors,

And rummaged like a rat no servant  
 stay'd

The farmer vext packs up his beds and  
 chairs,

And all his household stuff, and with his  
 boy

Between his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
 Sets out, and meets a friend who hails  
 him, 'What'

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,'  
 says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among  
 the beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us  
 too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home  
 again

*John* He left his wife behind, for so  
 I heard

*James* He left her, yes I met my lady once

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs

*John* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect evidence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it flowers

*James* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere What betwixt shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd

To what she is a nature never kind!  
Like men, like manners like breeds like, they say

Kind nature is the best those manners next

That fit us like a nature second hand,  
Which are indeed the manners of the great

*John* But I had heard it was this bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove him hence

*James* That was the last drop in the cup of gall

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought

A Chartist pike You should have seen him wince

As from a venomous thing he thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs, but, sir, you know

That these two parties still divide the world—

Of those that want, and those that have—and still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age

With much the same result Now I myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school—a college in the South  
There lived a flaystunt near, we stole his fruit,

His hens, his eggs, but there was law for us,

We paid in person He had a sow, sir

She,

With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud

By night we dragg'd her to the college tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd

Large range of prospect had the mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved

As one by one we took them—but for this—

As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy but what lot is pure?

We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,

And so return'd unsorrow'd to her sty

*John* They found you out? *James* Not they

*John* Well—after all—  
What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong What ails us, who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows

To Pity—more from ignorance than will

But put your best foot forward, or I  
 fear  
 That we shall miss the mail and here it  
 comes  
 With five at top as quaint & four-in hand  
 As you shall see—three pylelds and a  
 roan

## EDWIN MORRIS,

## OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a  
 year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
 Of city life! I was a sketcher then  
 See here, my doing curves of mountain,  
 bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
 When men knew how to build, upon a  
 rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock  
 And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
 New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
 aires,

Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimney'd  
 bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
 With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
 Bull

The curate; he was fatter than his cure

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
 names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss and  
 fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
 rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row, to  
 swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
 His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he  
 seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
 And his first passion, and he answer'd  
 me,

And well his words became him was he  
 not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
 Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he  
 spoke

'My love for Nature is as old as I,  
 But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
 And three rich sennights more, my love  
 for her

My love for Nature and my love for her,  
 Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
 Twin-sisters differently beautiful

To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
 And some full music seem'd to move and  
 change

With all the varied changes of the dark,  
 And either twilight and the day between,  
 For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
 Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
 sweet

To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
 breathe'

Or thus or something like to this he  
 spoke

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
 Bull,

'I take it, God made the woman for  
 the man,

And for the good and increase of the  
 world

A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
 To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
 And keeps us tight, but these unreal  
 ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and in-  
 deed

Worn threadbare Man is made of solid  
 stuff

I say, God made the woman for the man,  
 And for the good and increase of the  
 world'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe  
 too low

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
 My faith beyond my practice into his  
 Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
 I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
 I scarce have other music yet say on



What should one give to light on such a dream ?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically

'Give?

Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek,  
'I would have hid her needle in my heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin my ears could hear

Her lightest breath, her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise I went and came,

Her voice fled always thro' the summer land,

I spoke her name alone Thrice happy days'

The flower of each, those moments when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no more'

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something jar'd,

Whether he spoke too largely, that there seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-conceit,

Or over smoothness howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone

Of all men happy Shall not Love to me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless you right and left?

But you can talk yours is a kindly vein  
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within,

Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,

That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place 'tis from no want in her

It is my shyness, or my self distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion Time will set me right'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull

'God made the woman for the use of man,

And for the good and increase of the world'

And I and Edwin laughed, and now we pruned

About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms

And alders, garden isles, and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran

By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the sound

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him

That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our runy isles

'Tis true, we met one hour I had, no more

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close, 'Your Letty, only yours,' and this

Thrice underscored The friendly mist of morn

Clung to the lake I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart

The Sweet Gale rustle round the shelving keel,

And out I stept, and up I crept she moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice, and she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed

In some new planet a silent cousin stole  
 Upon us and departed 'Leave,' she  
 cried,  
 'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never  
 here  
 I brave the worst' and while we stood  
 like fools  
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
 came  
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles 'What,  
 with him!  
 Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus),  
 'him!'  
 I choked Again they shriek'd the  
 burthen—'Him!'  
 Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!—  
 Girl, get you in!' She went—and in one  
 month  
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
 smile  
 And educated whisker But for me,  
 They set an ancient creditor to work  
 It seems I broke a close with force and  
 arms  
 There came a mystic token from the king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying  
 turn'd  
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below  
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the  
 storm,  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to  
 hear.  
 Nor cared to hear? perhaps yet long  
 ago  
 I have pardon'd little Letty, not indeed,  
 It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me,  
 For in the dust and drouth of London life  
 She moves among my visions of the lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his wing,  
 or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer  
 crag

## ST SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust  
 of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
 meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of sandtom, and to clamour, mourn and  
 sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms  
 of prayer,  
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin  
 Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
 God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
 years,  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes  
 and cramps,  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and  
 sleet, and snow,  
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy  
 rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and  
 the palm  
 O take the meaning, Lord I do not  
 breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were  
 still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin,  
 that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee  
 O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the  
 first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body then,  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt  
 away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my  
 beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with  
     sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and some  
     times saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang  
 Now am I feeble grown, my end draws  
     nigh,  
 I hope my end draws nigh half dead I am,  
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
 About the column's base, and almost blind,  
 And scarce can recognise the fields I  
     know,  
 And both my thighs are rotted with the  
     dew,  
 Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary  
     head,  
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the  
     stone,  
 Have mercy, mercy take away my sin  
 O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
 Who may be saved? who is it may be  
     saved?  
 Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?  
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
     than I  
 For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
 For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sown  
 In twain beneath the ribs, but I die here  
 To day, and whole years long, a life of  
     death  
 Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
 (And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
 More slowly painful to subdue this home  
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
 I had not stinted practice, O my God  
 For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
 Not this alone I bore but while I lived  
 In the white convent down the valley there,  
 For many weeks about my loins I wore  
 The rope that haled the buckets from the  
     well,  
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,  
 And spake not of it to a single soul,  
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
 Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
 My brethren marvell'd greatly More  
     than this

I bore, & heretof, O God, thou knowest all  
 Three winters, that my soul might  
     grow to thee,  
 I lived up there on yonder mountain  
     side  
 My right leg chun'd into the crag, I lay  
 Pent in a roofless close of rpyed stones;  
 Inswathed sometimes in winding mist,  
     and twice  
 Black'd with the branding thunder, and  
     sometimes  
 Suckling the damps for drink, and eating  
     not,  
 Except the spare chance-gift of those  
     that came  
 To touch my body and be heal'd, and live  
 And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
 Whereof my fame is told amongs' man  
     I ind,  
 Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,  
     O God,  
 Knowest alone whether this was or no  
 Have mercy, mercy ' cover all my sin  
 Then, that I might be more alone  
     with thee,  
 Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
 Six cubits, and three years on one of  
     twelve,  
 And twice three years I crouch'd on one  
     that rose  
 Twenty by measure, last of all, I grew  
 Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
 I hat numbers forty cubits from the soil  
 I think that I have borne as much as  
     this—  
 Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
 If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
 And this high dial, which my sorrow  
     crowns—  
 So much—even so  
     And yet I know not well,  
 For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
 ' Fall down, O Simeon thou hast suffer'd  
     long  
 For ages and for ages ' then they prate  
 Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
 Purplexing me with lies, and oft I fall,  
 Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
 That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are  
     choked

But yet  
 Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all  
 the saints  
 Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on  
 earth  
 House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
 Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
 some food,  
 And wear warm clothes, and even beasts  
 have stalls,  
 I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the  
 light,  
 Bow down one thousand and two hundred  
 times,  
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
 saints;  
 Or in the night, after a little sleep  
 I wake - the chill stars sparkle, I am  
 wet  
 With drenching dews, or stiff with crack-  
 ling frost  
 wear an uncess'd goatskin on my  
 back  
 A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the  
 cross,  
 And strive and wrestle with thee till I  
 die.  
 O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin  
 O Lord, thou knowest what a man I  
 am,  
 A sinful man, conceived and born in sin  
 'Tis their own doing, this is none of  
 mine,  
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
 this,  
 That here come those that worship me?  
 Ha! ha!  
 They think that I am somewhat. What  
 am I?  
 The silly people take me for a saint,  
 And bring me offerings of fruit and  
 flowers  
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
 here)  
 Have all in all endured as much, and  
 more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose  
 names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for saints

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
 What is it I can have done to merit this?  
 I am a sinner siler than you all  
 It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
 And cured some halt and maim'd, but  
 what of that?  
 It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
 My match his pains with mine, but  
 what of that?  
 Yet do not rise, for you may look on me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel to  
 God  
 Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?  
 I think you know I have some power  
 with Heaven  
 From my long penance let him speak  
 his wish  
 Yes, I can heal him. Power goes  
 forth from me  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah,  
 hark! they shout  
 'St Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved;  
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,  
 'Behold a saint!'  
 And lower voices sung me from above  
 Courage, St Simeon! This dull chrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere  
 death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that  
 God hath now  
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful  
 record all  
 My mortal archives  
 O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men, I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end,  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine  
 bakes,  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours  
 become  
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
 From my high nest of penance here pro-  
 claim  
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side

Show'd like fair seraphs    On the coals  
     I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin    all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over    Devils pluck'd my  
     sleeve,  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me  
 I smote them with the cross, they  
     swarm'd again  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd  
     my chest  
 They flapp'd my light out as I read    I  
     saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my  
     book,  
 With colt like whinny and with hoggish  
     whine  
 They burst my prayer    Yet this way  
     was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them    Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and  
     with thorns,  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not    If it may  
     be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray    I hardly, with  
     slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceed-  
     ing pain,  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
     that still  
 Sing in mine ears    But yield not me the  
     praise  
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought  
     fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this  
     world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to    Yet I do not  
     say  
 But that a time may come—yea, even  
     now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-  
     old stairs  
 Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without re-  
     proach,  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about my  
     dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my  
     bones,

When I am gather'd to the glorious  
     saints  
 While I spake then, a sting of shrewd-  
     est pain  
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike  
     change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes    The end! the  
     end!  
 Surely the end!    What's here? a shape,  
     a shade,  
 A flash of light    Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown?    Come, blessed  
     brother, come  
 I know thy glittering face    I waited  
     long,  
 My brows are ready    What! deny it  
     now?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh    So I  
     clutch it    Christ!  
 'Tis gone 'tis here again, the crown!  
     the crown!  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and  
     frankincense.  
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints  
     I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
     for Heaven  
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man of  
     God,  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to night,  
 A quarter before twelve  
     But thou, O Lord,  
 And all this foolish people, let them take  
 Example, pattern    lead them to thy light.

### THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls,  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey walls,  
 That stand within the chace

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke,  
 And ah! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
 Could hope itself return'd,

To yonder oak within the field  
 I spoke without restraint,  
 And with a larger faith appeal'd  
 Than Papist unto Saint

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
 And told him of my choice,  
 Until he plagiarised a heart,  
 And answer'd with a voice

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
 None else could understand,  
 I found him garrulously given,  
 A babbler in the land

But since I heard him make reply  
 Is many a weary hour,  
 'Twere well to question him, and try  
 If yet he keeps the power

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
 Whose topmost branches can discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
 If ever maid or spouse,  
 As fair as my Olivia, came  
 To rest beneath thy boughs —

O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
 Whatever maiden grace  
 The good old Summers, year by year  
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
 The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
 And number'd bead, and shrift,  
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
 And turn'd the cowls adrift

'And I have seen some score of those  
 Fresh faces, that would thrive  
 When his man-mudded offset rose  
 To chase the deer at five,

'And all that from the town would stroll,  
 Till that wild wind made work  
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
 Went by me, like a stork

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
 And others, passing praise,  
 Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
 For puritanic stays

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
 Of beauties, that were born  
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
 Or while the patch was worn,

'And, leg and arm with love knots gay,  
 About me leap'd and laugh'd  
 The modish Cupid of the day,  
 And shrill'd his tinsel shaft

'I swear (and else may insects prick  
 Each leaf into a gall)  
 This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
 Is three times worth them all,

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
 Have faded long ago,  
 But in these latter springs I saw  
 Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens  
 A baby germ, to when  
 The maiden blossoms of her teens  
 Could number five from ten

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
 (And hear me with thine ears,)  
 That, tho' I circle in the gram  
 Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass

'For as to faeries, that will fit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace,  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs

'O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town,  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down

And with him Albert came on his  
I look'd at him with joy  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf,  
She left the new piano shut  
She could not please herself

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her

'And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my "giant bole,"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace'  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place'

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plun,  
But not a creature was in sight  
She kiss'd me once again

'Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm

'I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My rapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss,  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well,  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell

'Tis little more the day was warm,  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sink her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs

'I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye,  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine,  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew

'And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree  
He lies beside thee on the grass  
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this'



Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
 Look further thro' the chace,  
 Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
 The front of Summer place

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
 That but a moment lay  
 Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
 Some happy future day

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
 The warmth it thence shall win  
 To riper life may magnetise  
 The baby-oak within

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
 Or lapse from hand to hand,  
 Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
 Thine acorn in the land

May never saw dismember thee,  
 Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
 That art the fairest spoken tree  
 From here to Lizard point

O rock upon thy towery-top  
 All throats that gurgle sweet !  
 All starry culmination drop  
 Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
 And while he sinks or swells  
 The full south breeze around thee blow  
 The sound of minster bells

The fat earth feed thy brachy root,  
 That under deeply strikes !  
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
 High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
 But, rolling as in sleep,  
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
 That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
 That only by thy side  
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
 And gain her for my bride

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair

And I will work in prose and rhyme  
 And praise thee more in both " "  
 Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth, " "

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke,  
 And more than England honours that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn

## LOVE AND DUTY

OF love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and break  
 ing hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?  
 Not so Shall Error in the round of  
 time

Stull father Truth? O shall the braggart  
 shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work  
 itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
 System and empire? Sin itself be found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
 Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-  
 self?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were  
 all,  
 Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless  
 days,

The long mechanic pacings to and fro,  
 The set gray life, and apathetic end  
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
 O three times less unworthy! likewise  
 thou

Art more thro' Love, and greater than  
 thy years,  
 The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
 Her circle Wait, and Love himself will  
 bring  
 The drooping flower of knowledge changed  
 to fruit  
 Of wisdom Wait my faith is large in  
 Time,  
 And that which shapes it to some perfect  
 end  
 Will some one say, Then why not ill  
 for good?  
 Why took ye not your pasture? To that  
 man  
 My work shall answer, since I knew the  
 right  
 And did it; for a man is not as God,  
 But then most Godlike being most a man  
 —So let me think 'tis well for thee and  
 me—  
 Ill fated that I am, what lot is mine  
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart  
 so slow  
 To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
 When eyes, love languid thro' half tears  
 would swell  
 One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
 Then not to dare to see! when thy low  
 voice,  
 Faltering, would break its syllables, to  
 keep  
 My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a  
 leash,  
 And not leap forth and fall about thy  
 neck,  
 And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)  
 Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
 weigh'd  
 Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!  
 For Love himself took part against  
 himself  
 To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
 O this world's curse,—beloved but hated  
 —came  
 Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and  
 mine,  
 And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy  
 bride,'  
 She push'd me from thee

If the sense is hard  
 To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me  
 Hard is my doom and thine thou  
 knowest it all  
 Could Love part thus? was it not well  
 to speak,  
 To have spoken once? It could not but  
 be well  
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
 things good,  
 The slow sad hours that bring us all  
 things ill,  
 And all good things from evil, brought  
 the night  
 In which we sat together and alone,  
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
 heart,  
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such  
 tears  
 As flow but once a life  
 The trance gave way  
 To those caresses, when a hundred times  
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and  
 died  
 Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the  
 words  
 That make a man feel strong in speaking  
 truth,  
 Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
 In that brief night, the summer night,  
 that paused  
 Among her stars to hear us, stars that  
 hung  
 Love charm'd to listen all the wheels of  
 Time  
 Spun round in station, but the end had  
 come  
 O then like those, who clench their  
 nerves to rush  
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
 There—closing like an individual life—  
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
 Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd  
 it,  
 And bade adieu for ever

Live—yet live—  
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing  
 all  
 Life needs for life is possible to will—  
 Live happy, tend thy flowers, be tended  
 by  
 My blessing! Should my Shadow cross  
 thy thoughts  
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
 hold,  
 If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
 Not all forgotten Should it cross thy  
 dreams,  
 O might it come like one that looks con-  
 tent,  
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
 And point thee forward to a distant light,  
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
 And leave thee freer, till thou wake  
 refresh'd  
 Then when the first low matin chirp hath  
 grown  
 Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow  
 of pearl  
 Far furrowing into light the mounded  
 rack,  
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern  
 sea

### THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which  
 Leonard wrote  
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales  
 Old James was with me we that day  
 had been  
 Up Snowdon, and I wish'd for Leonard  
 there,  
 And found him in Llanberis then we  
 crost  
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
 way up  
 The counter side, and that same song of  
 his  
 He told me, for I banter'd him, and  
 swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue tied Poet in the feverous days,

That, setting the *how much* before the  
*how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,  
 'Give,  
 Crum us with all,' but count not me the  
 herd!  
 To which 'They call me what they  
 will,' he said  
 'But I was born too late the fair new  
 forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be  
 caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher  
 crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock Let it be  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of  
 yesternorn.  
 'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all  
 things move,  
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun,  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
 ellipse,  
 And human things returning on them-  
 selves  
 Move onward, leading up the golden year  
 'Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
 thought can bud,  
 Are but as poets' seasons when they  
 flower,  
 Yet oceans duly graving on the land,  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
 march,  
 And slow and sure comes up the golden  
 year  
 'When wealth no more shall rest in  
 mounded heaps,  
 But smit with freer light shall slowly  
 melt  
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
 And light shall spread, and man be liker  
 man  
 Tho' all the season of the golden year  
 'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be  
 wrens?  
 If all the world were falcons, what of  
 that?  
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days

Roll onward, leading up the golden year  
 'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the  
 Press,  
 Fly happy with the mission of the Cross,  
 Knit land to land, and blowing haven-  
 ward  
 With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear  
 of toll,  
 Enrich the markets of the golden year  
 'But we grow old. Ah! when shall  
 all men's good  
 Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
 And like a line of beams athwart the  
 sea,  
 Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'  
 Thus far he flow'd, and ended, where-  
 upon  
 'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd  
 James—  
 'Ah, folly!' for it lies so far away,  
 Not in our time, nor in our children's  
 time,  
 'Tis like the second world to us that live,  
 'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
 Heaven  
 As on this vision of the golden year'  
 With that he struck his staff against  
 the rocks  
 And broke it,—James,—you know him,  
 —old but full  
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his  
 feet,  
 And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis  
 Then added, all in heat  
 'What stuff is this!  
 Old writers push'd the happy season  
 back,—  
 The more fools they,—we forward  
 dreamers both  
 You most, that in an age, when every  
 hour  
 Must sweat her sixty minutes to the  
 death,  
 Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman,  
 rapt  
 Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
 plunge  
 His hand into the bag but well I know

That unto him who works, and feels he  
 works,  
 This same grand year is ever at the  
 doors'  
 He spoke; and, high above, I heard  
 them blast  
 The steep slate-quarry, and the great  
 echo flap  
 And buffet round the hills, from bluff to  
 bluff

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren  
 crags,  
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and  
 dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and  
 know not me  
 I cannot rest from travel I will drink  
 Life to the lees all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with  
 those  
 That loved me, and alone, on shore, and  
 when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea I am become a name,  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known, cities of  
 men  
 And manners, climates, councils, govern-  
 ments,  
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them  
 all,  
 And drunk delight of battle with my  
 peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy  
 Troy  
 I am a part of all that I have met,  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose  
 margin fades  
 For ever and for ever when I move  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' to breathe were life Life piled  
 on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something  
more,

A bringer of new things, and vile it  
were

For some three suns to store and hoard  
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human  
thought

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
Well loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labour, by slow prudence to make  
mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good  
Most blameless is he, centred in the  
sphere

Of common duties, darent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone He works his work,  
I mine

There lies the port, the vessel puff-  
her sail

There gloom the dark broad seas My  
mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and  
thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome tool  
The thunder and the sunshine, and  
opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I  
are old,

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil,  
Death closes all but something ere the  
end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be  
done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with  
Gods

The lights begin to twinkle from the  
rocks

The long day wanes the slow moon  
climbs the deep

Moans round with many voices Come,  
my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world

Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrow, for my purpose  
holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
down

It may be I shall reach the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom I  
knew

Tho' much is taken, much abides, and  
tho'

We are not now that strength which in  
old days

Moved earth and heaven; that which we  
are, we are,

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong  
in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and  
fall,

The vapours weep their burthen to the  
ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies  
beneath,

And after many a summer dies the swan—  
We only cruel immortality

Consumes I wither slowly in 'hire arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white hair'd shadow roaming like a  
dream

The ever silent spaces of the Fast,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of  
morn

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a  
man—

So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
seem'd

To his great heart none other than a God!  
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality'

Then didst thou grant mine asking with  
a smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they  
give

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
their wills,  
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted  
me.

And tho' they could not end me, left me  
mum'd

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill  
with tears

To hear me? Let me go take back thy  
gift

Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet  
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart, there  
comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I  
was born  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer  
steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy  
shoulders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighter slowly close to  
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild  
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,  
arise,

And shake the darkness from their  
loosen'd manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer  
given

Departest, and thy tears are on my  
cheek

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy  
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,

In days far-off, on that dark earth, be  
true?

'The Gods themselves cannot recall their  
gifts'

As me! ay me! with what another  
heart

In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee,  
saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny rings,  
Changed with thy mystic change, and  
felt my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd  
all

Thy presence and thy portals, while I  
lay,

Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-  
warm

With kisses balmyer than half-opening  
buds

O! April, and could hear the lips that  
kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and  
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo  
sing,

While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East  
How can my nature longer mix with  
thine?

Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled  
feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when  
the steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the  
homes

Of happy men that have the power to  
die,

And grassy barrows of the happier dead  
Release me, and restore me to the ground,  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my  
grave

Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
morn,

I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn  
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle horn

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall,

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
 And the hollow ocean ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,  
 Glitter like a swarm of fire flies tangled in a silver braid

'Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
 With the fury tales of science, and the long result of Time,

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed  
 When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see,  
 Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be — —

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast,  
 In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest,

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove,  
 In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,  
 And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,  
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong,  
 Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands,  
 Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might,  
 Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the cospes ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay

As the husband is, the wife is thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse

What is this ? his eyes are heavy think not they are glazed with wine  
Go to him it is thy duty kiss him . take his hand in thine

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace

! Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !  
! Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

! Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !  
! Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—  
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the mind ?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind ?



I remember one that perish'd sweetly did she speak and move ;  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?  
No—she never loved me truly love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the ruin is on the roof

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears,

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow get thee to thy rest again

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace, for a tender voice will cry  
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry

Baby lips will laugh me down my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearthness not his due  
Half is thine and half is his it will be worthy of the two

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt'

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ' wherefore should I care ?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these ?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow  
I have but an angry fancy what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life,

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn,

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be,

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales,

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' aury navies grappling in the central blue,

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm,

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were fur'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye,

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bright horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ' woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta battle fell my father evil star'd;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breaths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise

Never comes the trader, never floats in European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag,

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that strike mankind

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun,

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vicar of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon'

Not in vain the distance beacons Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall'  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over hearth and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow,  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry,  
I hurg with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,*

*To watch the three tall spires and there  
I shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this —*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd, but  
she

Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Co'ventry for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay,  
we starve'

She sought her lord, and found him, where  
he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair

A yard behind She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax,  
they starve'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as these?' — 'But I would die,'  
said she

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear,  
'Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!' — 'Alas!' she  
said,

'But prove me what it is I would not do'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the  
town,

And I repeal it,' and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his  
dogs

So left alone, the passions of her mind.  
As winds from all the compass shift and  
blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet,  
all

The hard condition, but that she would loose

The people therefore, as they loved her well,

From then till noon no foot should pace the street,

No eye look down, she passing, but that all Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift, but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud anon she shook her head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee,

Unclad herself in haste, adown the stair  
Stole on, and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway, there she found her palfrey trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity

The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear

The little wide mouth'd heads upon the spout

Had cunning eyes to see the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame her palfrey's foot-fall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses the blind walls

Were full of chunks and holes; and overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white flower'd elder-thicket from the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity

And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,

Boring a little asger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him So the Powers, who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused  
And she, that knew not, pass'd and all at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,

One after one but even then she gain'd  
Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
And built herself an everlasting name

## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak

A pleasant hour has passed away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods  
And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form  
And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it Turn your face,

Nor look with that too earnest eye—  
The rhymes are dazzled from their place

And order'd words asunder fly

## THE SLEEPING PALACE

### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,

Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins  
 Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows  
     come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb

## II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-frown  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden like withdrawn  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearth the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his hurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily no sound is made,  
 Not even of a gnat that sings  
 More like a picture seemeth all  
 Than those old portraits of old kings,  
 That watch the sleepers from the wall

## IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
 Between his knees, half drun'd, and  
     there  
 The wrinkled steward at his task,  
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair,  
 The page has caught her hand in his  
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak  
 His own are pouted to a kiss  
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek

## V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
 Make prisms in every carven glass,  
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine  
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring  
 His state the king reposing keeps  
 He must have been a jovial king

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood,  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as blood,  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace spire

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy Prince

## ✓ THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
 She lying on her couch alone,  
 Across the purple coverlet,  
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
 On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl

## II

The silk star-broder'd coverlid  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever, and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward  
     roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond bright  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with light

## III

She sleeps her breathings are not heard  
 In palace chambers far apart  
 The fragrant tresses are not stir'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.

She sleeps on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly  
 prest  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest

### THE ARRIVAL

#### I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth,  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden  
 worth

He travels far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
 A fury Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter footed than the fox

#### II

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass  
 He gazes on the silent dead  
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds'  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 'The many fail the one succeeds'

#### III

He comes, scarce knowing what he  
 seeks  
 He breaks the hedge he enters  
 there  
 The colour flies into his cheeks  
 He trusts to light on something fair  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear

#### IV

More close and close his footsteps  
 wind  
 The M<sup>u</sup>se M<sup>u</sup>se in his heart  
 Beat quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.

His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be'

### THE REVIVAL

#### I

A TOUCH, a kiss the charm was snapt  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks,  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt

#### II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract

#### III

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
 And wawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
 spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!  
 How say you? we have slept, my lords  
 My beard has grown into my lap'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap

#### IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago?'  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply  
 But dallied with his golden chun,  
 And, smiling, put the question by

## THE DEPARTURE

I

And on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss,'  
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
 'O love, 'twas such as this and this'  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn

III

'O eyes long hid in happy sleep'  
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled'  
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep'  
 ✓ 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead'  
 And o'er them many a flowing range  
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
 The twilight died into the dark

IV

'A hundred summers I can it be?  
 And whither goest thou, tell me where?'  
 'O seek my father's court with me,  
 For there are greater wonders there'  
 And o'er the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 Beyond the night, across the day,  
 Thro' all the world he follow'd him

## MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find no moral there,  
 Go, look in any glass and say,  
 What moral is in being fair

Oh, to what uses shall we put  
 The wild weed-flower that simply blows?  
 And is there any moral shut  
 Within the bosom of the rose?

II

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
 According as his humours lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend,  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end

## L'ENVOI

I

You shake your head A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends,  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men,  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore,  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers,  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes,  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times

II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decades new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquennials would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change

III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!



For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care,  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you,  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
 hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
 join'd?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind,  
 Which all too dearly self involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me,  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see  
 But break it In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name my  
 give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fur?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
 light?  
 Or old world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you

## AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren  
 Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland

O had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion!  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation,  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes

The mountain stir'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes prouctted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches,  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing

The hinden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
 And down the middle, buzz! she went  
 With all her bees behind her  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie,  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave  
 Poussetting with a sloe tree

Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great handship, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended,  
And shepherds from the mountain craves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-fright-  
en'd,

As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure,  
So youthful and so flexible then,  
You moved her at your pleasure  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the  
twigs !

And make her dance attendance,  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle,  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle,  
Or at the most, when three parts sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass hechaws from the rich,  
The passive oxen gaping

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading,  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
To look as if they grew there

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy,  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom

### ST AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground,  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round,  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee,  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be  
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean

He lifts me to the golden doors,  
The flashes come and go,  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,

And deepens on and up! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin  
The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure  
The shattering trumpet shilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly run from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall!  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
shrine

I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine  
More bounteous respects on me beam,  
No mightier transports move and thrill  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will!

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns  
Then by some secret shrine I ride,  
I hear a voice but none are there,  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair  
Fair gleams the snowy altar cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between

Sonour on lonely mountain peaks  
I find a voice that  
I leap on board! no helmsman steers,  
I float till all is o'er!  
A gleam of light, an angel's light,  
Three angels bear the holy Grail  
With soiled feet, in robes of white,  
On cushions of silk they kneel—  
Ah, the old knight's blood of God!  
My spirit leapt for mortal fear,  
When a dark tale the glory shames,  
And star-like smiles with the stars

When on my lonely chair, a corpse  
Thro' dreary windows I see  
The crows come ere the Christmas  
morn

The streets are dark with snow,  
The tempest rattles on the lead,  
And, in the night, from hearth and  
nail,

But o'er the dark a glow spreads,  
And gilds the dimming hall  
I leave the plan, I shrive the knight,  
No brain by thine! After justice,  
But blessed arms in whirling storm  
Ily o'er a sea of ice and wind I ride!

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear,  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure voices echo in living beams  
Pure lines of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams:  
And, struck by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear  
This weight and use, this heart and  
eyes,

Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain walls  
A rolling organ harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls,  
Then move the trees, the cypresses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear  
'O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near'

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange,  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail

## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
'And have you lost your heart?' she said;  
'And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold,  
Thought her proud, and fled over thesea  
Full'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me

Cruel, cruel the words I said '  
Cruelly came they back to day  
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray "

There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair  
'repent me of all I did  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair,  
And here the heart of Edward Gray "

'Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree,  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me

'Bitterly wept I over the stone  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair '  
And there the heart of Edward Gray "

WILL WATERPROOF'S  
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port  
But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten,  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favour'd lips of mine,  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom

I pledge her silent at the board,  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble,  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd,  
The gas-light wavers dimmer,  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
 Unboding critic pen,  
 Or that eternal wint of pence,  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them—  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood,  
 There must be stormy weather,  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together

Let there be thistles, there are grapes,  
 If old things, there are new,  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons

This earth is rich in man and maid,  
 With fair horizons bound  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out a perfect round  
 High over roaring Temple bar,  
 And set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But thro' a kind of glory

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
 The pint, you brought me, was the best  
 That ever came from pipe  
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer  
 Is there some magic in the place?  
 Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,

Which bears a season'd brain about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Tho' sorb'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Thro' every convolution

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double,

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo,  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all in-all to all  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each  
 He looks not like the common breed  
 That with the naphin dally,  
 I think he came like Grynmede,  
 From some delightful valley

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramm'd a plumper crop,  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle bodied boy  
That knuckled at the traw  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fur and  
good,  
Flew over roof and casement  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock still for sheer amovement  
  
But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
And follow'd with acclams,  
A sign to many a staring shire  
Came crowing over Thames  
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head waiter

But whither would my fancy go?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and sterks!  
Tis but a steird of the can,  
One shade more plump than common,  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any born of woman

I ranged too high what draws me down  
Into the common day?  
Is it the weight of that half crown,  
Which I shall have to pay?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
And thrumming on the table

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
I take myself to task,  
Lest of the fulness of my life  
I leave an empty flask  
For I had hope, by something rare  
To prove myself a poet  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up,  
The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup

And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!  
We know not what we know  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,  
'Tis gone, and let it go  
'Tis gone a thousand such have slept  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more,  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters,  
The tavern hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show,  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches,  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
His literary leeches

So mix for ever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth!  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
last,  
At half thy real worth?  
I hold it good, good things should pass  
With time I will not quarrel  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort,  
I too must part I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.  
For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
Marrow of mirth and laughter,  
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
Shall fling her old shoe after

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot,  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot,  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick set hazel dies,  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more,  
 No carved cross bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven

### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn  
 Lovers long betroth'd were they  
 They will wed the morrow morn  
 God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my hands so broad and fair,  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, 'Who was this that went from  
 thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
 'To-morrow he weds with me'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'That all comes round so just and fair  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,  
 my nurse?'

Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so  
 wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'I speak the truth you are my child'

'The old Earl's daughter died at my  
 breast,

I speak the truth, as I live by bread'  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'But keep the secret for your life,  
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
 When you are man and wife'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie  
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
 And fling the diamond necklace by'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'But keep the secret all ye can'  
 She said, 'Not so but I will know  
 If there be any faith in man'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'The man will cleave unto his right'  
 'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
 'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear'  
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee'  
 'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
 'So strange it seems to me'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
 My mother dear, if this be so,  
 And lay your hand upon my head,  
 And bless me, mother, ere I go'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
 She was no longer Lady Clare  
 She went by dale, and she went by down,  
 With a single rose in her hair

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
 brought  
 Leapt up from where she lay,  
 Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
 And follow'd her all the way

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower  
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth'  
 Why come you drest like a village maid,  
 That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are  
 I am a beggar born,' she said,  
 'And not the Lady Clare'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'For I am yours in word and in deed  
 Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'Your riddle is hard to read'

O and proudly stood she up  
 Her heart within her did not fail  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn  
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she  
 stood.

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—'

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare'

## THE CAPTAIN

### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror  
 Doeth grievous wrong  
 Deep as Hell I count his error  
 Let him hear my song  
 Brave the Captain was the seamen  
 Made a gallant crew,  
 Gallant sons of English freemen,  
 Sailors bold and true  
 But they hated his oppression,  
 Stern he was and rash,  
 So for every light transgression  
 Doom'd them to the lash  
 Day by day more harsh and cruel  
 Seem'd the Captain's mood  
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
 Burnt in each man's blood  
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
 Hoped to make the name  
 Of his vessel great in story,  
 Wheresoe'er he came  
 So they past by capes and islands,  
 Many a harbour-mouth,  
 Sailing under palmy highlands  
 Far within the South  
 On a day when they were going  
 O'er the lone expanse,  
 In the north, her canvas flowing,  
 Rose a ship of France  
 Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
 Joyful came his speech  
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
 In the eyes of each  
 'Chase,' he said the ship flew for  
 ward,  
 And the wind did blow,  
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
 Till she near'd the foe  
 Then they look'd at him they hated  
 Hid what they desired.  
 Mute with folded arms they waited—  
 Not a gun was fired  
 But they heard the foeman's thunder  
 Roaring out their doom,  
 All the air was torn in sunder.  
 Crashing went the boom,



Spars weresplinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
 Bullets fell like rain,  
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
 Blood and brains of men  
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were broken  
 Every mother's son—  
 Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
 Each beside his gun  
 On the decks as they were lying,  
 Were their faces grim  
 In their blood, as they lay dying,  
 Did they smile on him  
 Those, in whom he had reliance  
 For his noble name,  
 With one smile of still defiance  
 Sold him unto shame  
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
 Pale he turn'd and red,  
 Till himself was deadly wounded  
 Falling on the dead  
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
 Years have wander'd by,  
 Side by side beneath the water  
 Crew and Captain lie,  
 There the sunlit ocean tosses  
 O'er them mouldering,  
 And the lonely seabird crosses  
 With one waft of the wing

### THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,  
 'If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well'  
 She replies, in accents fainter,  
 'There is none I love like thee'  
 He is but a landscape painter,  
 And a village maiden she  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof  
 'I can make no marriage present  
 Little can I give my wife.  
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life'  
 They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand

Summer woods, about them blowing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.  
 From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 'Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell'  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers,  
 Parks with owl and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state  
 All he shows her makes him dearer  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they ~~would~~ will spend their days  
 O but she will love him truly!  
 He shall have a cheerful home;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns,  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 'All of this is mine and thine'  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he  
 All at once the colour flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love

So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
 To all duties of her rank -  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honour  
 Unto which she was not born.  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me !'  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pining down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Sturford-town  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed'  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest

## THE VOYAGE

### I

We left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbour mouth,  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the South  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore !  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

### II

Warm broke the breeze against the  
 brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail.

The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the  
 gale  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind, so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

### III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-shirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

### IV

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield,

### V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove

### VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
 brine  
 With ashy rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastic plume or sable pine,  
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !  
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ,  
 At times a carven craft would shoot  
 From havens hid in fury bowers,  
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
 But we not pruned for fruit nor flowers

## VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
 Down the waste waters day and night,  
 And still we follow'd where she led,  
 In hope to gun upon her flight  
 Her face was evermore unseen,  
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ,  
 But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,  
 I follow till I make thee mine '

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
 Like Fancy made of golden air,  
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
 Now high on waves that idly burst  
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
 sea,  
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
 She bore the blade of Liberty

## X.

And only one among us—him  
 We pleased not—he was seldom  
 pleased  
 He saw not far his eyes were dim  
 But ours he swore were all diseased  
 'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
 'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and  
 wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI

And never sail of ours was fur'd,  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ,  
 We lov'd the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn

For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
 But whence were those that drove the  
 sail

Across the whirlwind's heart of perice,  
 And to and thro' the counter gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
 For still we follow'd where she led .  
 Now mate is blind and captan lame,  
 And half the crew are sick or dead,  
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
 We follow that which flies before  
 We know the merry world is round,  
 And we may sul for evermore

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

## A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun lit fill of rain  
 In crystal vapour every where  
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
 And far, in forest deeps unseen,  
 The topmost elm tree gather'd green  
 . From draughts of balmy air

Sometimes the linnet piped his song  
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong  
 Sometimes the sparrow, wheel'd along,  
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong  
 By grassy capes with fuller sound  
 In curves the yellowing river ran,  
 And drooping chestnut-buds began  
 To spread into the perfect fun,  
 Above the teeming ground

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
 With blissful treble ringing clear  
 She seem'd a part of joyous Spring  
 A gown of grass green silk she wore,  
 Buckled with golden clasps before ,  
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
 Closed in a golden ring

Now on some twisted myrtle,  
 Now by some arking rivulet,  
 In mosses moist with violet  
 Her crease white mantle has pattern set  
 And faster now she shrouded the  
 pines

Than she whose elfin voice springs  
 To night to every tributage,  
 When all the glimmering moorland rings  
 With jingling bridle rings

As fast he fled thru sun and shade,  
 The happy wren up a her play'd,  
 Blowing the rattle from the brud  
 She look'd so lovely, as she said  
 The rain with dainty finger-tips  
 A man had given all other bliss,  
 And all his worldly worth for this,  
 'T was she who's heart in one kiss  
 Upon her perfect lips

### A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
 Thy tribute wave deliver  
 No more by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
 A rivulet then a river  
 No where by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
 And here thine aspen elver,  
 And here by thee will hum the bee,  
 For ever and for ever

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
 A thousand moons will quiver,  
 But not by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid,  
 She was more fur than words can say  
 Bare footed came the beggar maid  
 Before the king Cophetua

In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
 To meet and greet her on her way,  
 'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
 'She is more beautiful than day'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
 She in her poor attire was seen  
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
 O'er her dark hair and loveliest mien  
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been  
 Cophetua swore a royal oath  
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

### THE EAGLE

#### FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with crooked hands,  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
 Thy orange sunset waning slow  
 From fringes of the faded eve,  
 O, happy planet, eastward go,  
 Fill over thy dark shoulder glow  
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
 To glass herself in dewy eyes  
 That watch me from the glen below

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
 Dip forward under starry light,  
 And move me to my marriage-morn,  
 And round again to happy night

COME not, when I am dead,  
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my  
 grave,  
 To trample round my fallen head,  
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst  
 not save  
 There let the wind sweep and the plover  
 cry;  
 But thou, go by

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
 I care no longer, being all unblest  
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of  
     Time,  
 And I desire to rest  
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where  
     I lie  
     Go by, go by

## THE LETTERS

## I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
 And saw the altar cold and bare  
 A clog of lead was round my feet,  
 A band of pain across my brow,  
 'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
 Before you hear my marriage vow'

## II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
 That mock'd the wholesome human  
     heart,  
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
 We met, but only meant to part  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry,  
 She furtly smiled, she hardly moved,  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colours I approved

## III

She took the little ivory chest,  
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
 And gave my letters back to me  
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
     please,  
 As looks a father on the things  
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## IV

She told me all her friends had said,  
 I raged against the public liar,  
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
 But in my words were seeds of fire

'No more of love, your sex is known  
 I never will be twice deceiv'd  
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
 The woman cannot be believed

## V.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—  
 And women's slander is the worst,  
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst'  
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
 Like torrents from a mountain source  
 We rush'd into each other's arms

## VI

We parted sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
 And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
 As homeward by the church I drew  
 The very graves appear'd to smile,  
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells  
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.

## THE VISION OF SIN

## I

I HAD a vision when the night was late  
 A youth came riding toward a palace gate  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would  
     have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and  
     capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
     shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes

## II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground,

Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
 Low voluptuous music winding tremoled,  
 Wov'n in circles they that heard it sigh'd,  
 Painted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied,

Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
 Sleet of drimond-drift and pearly hail,  
 Then the music touch'd the gutes and died,  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song a growing gale,  
 Till thronging in and in, to where they  
 wanted,

As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
 The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd  
 and palpitated;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
 Flung the torrent runbow round  
 Then they started from their places,  
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
 Half-invisible to the view,  
 Wheeling with precipitate paces  
 To the melody, till they flew,  
 Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
 Dash'd together in blinding dew  
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
 The nerve-dissolving melody  
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-  
 tract,  
 That girt the region with high cliff and  
 lawn

I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,  
 Unheeded and detaching, fold by fold,  
 From those still heights, and, slowly  
 drawing near,

A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
 Came floating on for many a month and  
 year,

Unheeded and I thought I would have  
 spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew too  
 late

But, as in dreams, I could not Mine  
 was broken,

When that cold vapour touch'd the palace  
 gate,

And link'd again I saw within my head  
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as  
 death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said

## IV

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !

Here is custom come your way,  
 Take my brute, and lead him in,  
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay

' Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
 See that sheets are on my bed ;  
 What ! the flower of life is past  
 It is long before you wed

' Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,  
 At the Dragon on the heath !  
 Let us have a quiet hour,  
 Let us hob and-nob with Death

' I am old, but let me drink,  
 Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
 I remember, when I think,  
 That my youth was half divine.

Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
 When a blanket wraps the day,  
 When the rotten woodland craps,  
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay

' Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
 Cheek by joy, and knee by knee -  
 What care I for any name ?  
 What for order or degree ?

' Let me screw thee up a peg  
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine -  
 Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
 Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

' Thou shalt not be saved by works .  
 Thou hast been a sinner too :  
 Runn'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
 Empty scarecrows, I and you !

' Fill the cup, and fill the can  
Have a rouse before the morn  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born

' We are men of ruin'd blood ,  
Therefore comes it we are wise  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies

' Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the  
schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools

' Friendship !—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack !  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back

' Virtue !—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell

' O' we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbour's wife

' Fill the cup, and fill the can  
Have a rouse before the morn  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born

' Drink, and let the parties rave  
They are fill'd with idle spleen ,  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean

' He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power ,  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour

' Fill the can, and fill the cup  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again

' Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread .  
In her right a civic wreath  
In her left a human head

' No, I love not what is new ,  
She is of an ancient house  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows

' Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

' Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate

' Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes

' Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ,  
Set thy hoary fancies free ,  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me

' Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand

' Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ,  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance

Fill the can, and fill the cup  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again

' Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap fallen circle spreads  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

'You are bones, and what of that?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground plan—  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed'

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath!  
Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
Hob and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near  
What! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
Unto me my maudlin gill  
And my mockeries of the world

'Fill the cup, and fill the can  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
Dregs of life, and lees of man—  
Yet we will not die forlorn'

## V

The voice grew faint there came a  
further change

Once more uprose the mystic mountain-  
range

Below were men and horses pierced with  
worms,

And slowly quickening into lower forms,  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of  
dross,

Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss

Then some one spake. 'Behold! it was  
a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with  
time'

Another said 'The crime of sense  
became

The crime of malice, and is equal blame'  
And one 'He had not wholly quench'd  
his power,

A little grain of conscience made him  
sour'

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
To which an answer peal'd from that high  
land,

But in a tongue no man could understand,  
And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn

God made Himself an awful rose of dawn

## TO

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTER...

'Cursed be he that moves my bones'  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim,

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry

'Proclaim the faults he would not show  
Break lock and seal betray the trust  
Keep nothing sacred 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know'



Ah shameless ' for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its worth,  
No public life was his on earth,  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king

He gave the people of his best  
His worst he kept, his best he gave  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and  
knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd !

### TO E L, ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneian pass,  
The vast Akroeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
thrown  
By fountain urns,—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars, on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell,  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill,  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me

### THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the  
street,

A light wind blew from the gates of the  
sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the  
wheat,

And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swain pause in her  
cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly  
The snake slpt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on  
his beak,

And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have  
sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away'

# ENOCH ARDEN

## AND OTHER POEMS.

### ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a  
chasm,  
And in the chasm are form and yellow  
sands;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
In cluster, then a moulder'd church, and  
higher  
A long street climbs to one tall tower'd  
mill;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
With Danish barrows, and a hazelwood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
drawn,  
And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or following up  
And flying the white breaker, daily left  
The little footprint duly wash'd away

A narrow cave run in beneath the cliff  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annie still was mistress, but at  
times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week  
'This is my house and this my little wife'  
'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn  
about'  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-  
made

Was master then would Philip, his blue  
eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
tears,  
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at  
this  
The little wife would weep for company,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her  
sake,  
And say she would be little wife to both

But when the dawn of rosy childhood  
past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending  
sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl, and Enoch spoke his  
love,  
But Philip loved in silence, and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him,  
But she loved Enoch, tho' she knew it  
not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make a  
home  
For Annie and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
coast  
Than Enoch Likewise had he served a  
year  
On board a merchantman, and made  
himself  
Full sailor, and he thrice had pluck'd a  
life  
From the dread sweep of the down-stream-  
ing seas  
And all men look'd upon him favourably  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth  
May

He purchased his own boat, and made a home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, half way up  
The narrow street that clamber'd toward  
the mill

Then, on a golden autumn eve-tide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,  
Went nutting to the hazels Philip stay'd  
(His father lying sick and needing him)  
An hour behind, but as he climb'd the hill,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood  
begin

To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,  
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in hand,  
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face

All kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
That burn'd as on an altar Philip look'd,  
And in their eyes and faces read his doom,  
Then, as their faces drew together,  
groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
Crept down into the hollows of the wood  
There, while the rest were loud in merry making,

Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past  
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
the bells,  
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,  
Seven happy years of health and competence,

And mutual love and honourable toil,  
With children, first a daughter In him  
woke,

With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish

To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
And give his child a better bringing up  
Than his had been, or hers, a wish re-  
new'd,

When two years after came a boy to be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes,

While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
Or often journeying landward; for in truth  
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean  
spoil

In ocean smelling o'er, and his face,  
Rough redder'd with a thousand winter  
gales,

Not only to the market were Enoch  
Put in the leafy lanes behind the door,  
Far as the portal winding lion whelp,  
And peacock windows of the lonely Hall  
Where Friday fare was Enoch's man's  
inn

Then came a change, as all things  
human change

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
Open'd a larger haven that her used  
Enoch at times to go by land or sea,  
And once when the cold chambering, or  
winter

In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell

A limb was broken when they lifted  
him,

And while he lay recovering there, his  
wife

Bore him another son, a sickly one  
Another hand crept too across his trade  
Taking her bread and their and on him  
fell,

Altho' a grave and stout God-fearing  
man

Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom  
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
To see his children leading evermore  
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth  
And her, he loved, a beggar. then he  
pry'd

'Save them from this, whatever comes to  
me'

And while he pry'd, the master of that  
ship

Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-  
chance,

Came, for he knew the man and valued  
him,

Reporting of his vessel China bound,  
And wanting yet a boatswain Would  
he go?

There yet were many weeks before she  
sail'd,  
Sail'd from this port Would Enoch  
have the place?  
And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer

So now that shadow of mischance  
appear'd  
No graver than as when some little cloud  
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
And isles a light in the offing yet the  
wife—  
When he was gone—the children—what  
to do?  
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
plans,  
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her  
well—  
How many a rough sea had he weather'd  
in her!  
He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
horse—  
And yet to sell her—then with what she  
brought  
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth  
in trade  
With all that seamen needed or their  
wives—  
So might she keep the house while he  
was gone  
Should he not trade himself out yonder?  
go  
This voyage more than once? yea twice  
or thrice—  
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
Become the master of a larger craft,  
With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
And pass his days in peace among his  
own

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all  
Then moving homeward came on Annie  
pale,  
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born  
Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms,  
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled father  
like,  
But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
had girt  
Her finger, Annie fought against his will  
Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in vain,  
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'

For Enoch parted with his old sea  
friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set  
his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
With shelf and corner for the goods and  
stores  
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and  
axe,  
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand,—  
The space was narrow,—having order'd  
all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused,  
and he,  
Who needs would work for Annie to the  
last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn

And Enoch faced this morning of fare  
well  
Brightly and boldly All his Annie's fears,  
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to  
him  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery

Where God-in man is one with man in-  
God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes  
Whatever came to him and then he said  
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us  
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and  
he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—  
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—  
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home  
again

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go'

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,

And almost hoped herself, but when he  
turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she  
heard,

Heard and not heard him, as the village  
girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you  
are wise,

And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no more'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look  
on yours

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day) get you a seaman's  
glass,

Spy out my face, and laugh at all your  
fears'

But when the last of those last moments  
came,

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again

Keep everything shipshape, for I must go  
And fear no more for me, or if you fear  
Crist all your cares on God, that anchor  
holds

Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His He made it'

Enoch rose,

Cast his strong arms about his drooping  
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones,  
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept  
After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him  
Enoch said

'Wake him not, let him sleep, how  
should the child

Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his  
cot

But Annie from her baby's forehead clip  
A tiny curl, and gave it thus he kept  
Thro' all his future, but now hastily  
caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and went  
his way

She when the day, that Enoch  
mention'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous,  
She saw him not and while he stood on  
deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for  
him,

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his  
grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch  
say?'

For more than once, in days of difficulty

And pressure, had she sold her wares for  
less  
Than what she gave in buying what she  
sold  
She fild and sadden'd knowing it, and  
this,  
Expectant of that news which never came,  
Gin'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy

Now the third child was sickly - born  
and grew  
Yet sicker, tho' the mother cared for it  
With all a mothers care nevertheless,  
Whether her business often cull'd her from  
it,  
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
Or means to pry the voice who best could  
tell  
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,  
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away

In that same week when Annie buried  
it,  
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her  
peace  
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon  
her),  
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long  
'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,  
May be some little comfort,' therefore  
went,

Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd, but Annie, seated with her grief,  
Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
Cared not to look on any human face,  
But turn'd her own toward the wall and  
wept

Then Philip standing up said falteringly  
'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you'

He spoke, the passion in her moan'd  
reply  
'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am' half abash'd him, yet unask'd,  
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her

'I came to speak to you of what he  
wish'd,  
Enoch, your husband I have ever said  
You chose the best among us—a strong  
man  
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'  
And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
And leave you lonely? not to see the  
world—

For pleasure?—nay, but for the where  
withal  
To give his babes a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or yours that was  
his wish  
And if he come again, next will he be  
To find the precious morning hours were  
lost

And it would vex him even in his grave,  
If he could know his babes were running  
wild  
Like colts about the waste So, Annie,  
now—

Have we not known each other all our  
lives?

I do beseech you by the love you bear  
Him and his children not to say me nay—  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,  
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do  
Now let me put the boy and girl to school  
This is the favour that I came to ask'

Then Annie with her brows against the  
wall

Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face  
I seem so foolish and so broken down  
When you came in my sorrow broke me  
down,

And now I think your kindness breaks  
me down,

But Enoch lives, that is borne in on me  
He will repay you money can be repaid,  
Not kindness such as yours'

And Philip ask'd  
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon  
him,

And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
 Then calling down a blessing on his head  
 Caught at his hand, and wrung it passion  
 ately,  
 And past into the little garth beyond  
 So lifted up in spirit he moved away

Then Philip put the boy and girl to  
 school,  
 And bought them needful books, and  
 every way,  
 Like one who does his duty by his own,  
 Made himself theirs, and tho' for Annie's  
 sake,  
 Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
 He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
 And seldom crost her threshold, yet he  
 sent  
 Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and  
 fruit,  
 The late and early roses from his wall,  
 Or conies from the down, and now and  
 then,  
 With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
 To save the offence of charitable, flour  
 From his tall mill that whistled on the  
 waste

But Philip did not fathom Annie's  
 mind  
 Scarce could the woman when he came  
 upon her,  
 Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
 Light on a broken word to thank him  
 with  
 But Philip was her children's all in all,  
 From distant corners of the street they  
 ran  
 To greet his hearty welcome heartily,  
 Lords of his house and of his mill were  
 they,  
 Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
 Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with  
 him  
 And call'd him Father Philip Philip  
 grun'd  
 As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem'd to them  
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
 Down at the far end of an avenue,

Going we know not where and so ten  
 years,  
 Since Enoch left his hearth and native  
 land,  
 Fled forward, and no news of Enoch  
 came

It chanced one evening Annie's children  
 long'd  
 To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
 And Annie would go with them, then  
 they begg'd  
 For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too;  
 Him, like the working bee in blossom  
 dust,  
 Blanch'd with his mill, they found, and  
 srying to him  
 'Come with us Father Philip' he denied,  
 But when the children pluck'd at him to  
 go,  
 He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their  
 wish,  
 For was not Annie with them? and they  
 went

But after scaling half the wear down,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood  
 began  
 To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
 Fail'd her, and sighing, 'Let me rest' she  
 said  
 So Philip rested with her well-content;  
 While all the younger ones with jubilant  
 cries  
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a  
 plunge  
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent  
 or broke  
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
 And calling, here and there, about the  
 wood

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark  
 hour  
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded  
 life  
 He crept into the shadow at last he said.

Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen,  
Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in the  
wood  
Tired, Annie? for she did not speak a  
word  
'Tired? but her face had fall'n upon her  
hands;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship  
was lost'  
No more of that! why should you kill  
yourself  
And make them orphans quite?' And  
Annie said  
'I thought not of it but—I know not  
why—  
Their voices make me feel so solitary'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer  
spoke  
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long,  
That tho' I know not when it first came  
there,  
I know that it will out at last O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
That he who left you ten long years ago  
Should still be living, well then—let me  
speak  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help  
I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless—they say that women are so  
quick—  
Perhaps you know what I would have  
you know—  
I wish you for my wife I fear would  
prove  
A father to your children I do think  
They love me as a father I am sure  
That I love them as if they were mine  
own,  
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain years,  
We might be still as happy as God  
grants  
To any of his creatures Think upon it  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
No burthen, save my care for you and  
yours

And we have known each other all our  
lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you  
know'

Then answer'd Annie, tenderly she  
spoke  
'You have been as God's good angel in  
our house  
God bless you for it, God reward you for  
it,  
Philip, with something happier than my-  
self  
Can one love twice? can you be ever  
loved  
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'  
'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved  
A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,  
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a  
while  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not  
come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year  
O wait a little!' Philip sadly said  
'Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little' 'Nay' she  
cried  
'I am bound you have my promise—in  
a year  
Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine?'  
And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my  
year'

Here both were mute, till Philip glanc-  
ing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day  
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead,  
Then fearing night and chill for Annie,  
rose  
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the  
wood  
Up came the children laden with their  
spoil,  
Then all descended to the port, and there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave his  
hand,  
Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to  
you,



That was your hour of weakness. I was  
wrong,

I am always bound to you, but you are  
free'

Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am  
bound'

She spoke, and in one moment it  
were,

While yet she went about her household  
ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,  
That he had loved her longer than she  
knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
And there he stood once more before her  
face,

Claiming her promise 'Is it a year'  
she ask'd

'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again  
Come out and see' But she—she put  
him off—

So much to look to—such a change—a  
month—

Give her a month—she knew that she was  
bound—

A month—no more. Then Philip with  
his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
'Take your own time, Annie, take your  
own time.'

And Annie could have wept for pity of  
him,

And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,  
Till half-another year had slipped away

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong  
Some thought that Philip did but trifle  
with her,

Some that she but held off to draw him on,  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,  
As simple folk that knew not their own  
minds,

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own  
sor

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish,  
But evermore the daughter press' upon her  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty,  
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew  
Careworn and wan, and all these things  
fell on her

Sharp as reproven

At last one night it chanced

That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall'  
of night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her  
heart,

Started from bed, and wrack herself a  
light,

Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,

'Under the palm tree' That was nothing  
to her

No meaning there she closed the Book  
and slept

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height  
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun

'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy.  
he is singing

Hosanna in the highest yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be

palm

Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
"Hosanna in the highest!" Here she

woke,  
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to  
him

'There is no reason why we should not  
wed'

'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both  
our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once'

So these were wed and merrily rang the  
bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.

A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path.

She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,

She knew not what, nor loved she to be left alone at home, nor ventured out alone  
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch, Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew  
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,

Being with child but when her child was born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd, Then the new mother came about her heart,

Then her good Philip was her all in all, And that mysterious instinct wholly died

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd

The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unweary  
She slept across the summer of the world, Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair, She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually  
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought

Quaint monsters for the market of those times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes

Less lucky her home-voyage at first indeed

Thro' many a fur sea-circle, day by day, Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows

Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,

Then baffling, a long course of them; and last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens

Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,

Buo'y'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,

These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea

Now want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots

Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame  
There in a seaward-grazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thrutch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern So the three,

Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden rum and wreck,

Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life

They could not leave him After he was gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem,  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing thus in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone  
In those two deaths he read God's warning 'wait'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns

And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,

The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvulus

That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran

Even to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,

All these he saw, but what he fain had seen

That was your hour of weakness. I was  
wrong,  
I am always bound to you, but you are  
free.'  
Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am  
bound'

She spoke, and in one moment as it  
were,  
While yet she went about her household  
ways,  
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,  
That he had loved her longer than she  
knew,  
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
And there he stood once more before her  
face,  
Claiming her promise 'Is it a year?'  
she ask'd  
'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again  
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him off—  
So much to look to—such a change—a  
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his eyes  
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minds,  
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either Her own  
son  
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish,  
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And lift the household out of poverty,  
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Sharp as reproach

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That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall  
of night  
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her  
heart,  
Started from bed, and struck herself a  
light,  
Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
'Under the palm tree' That was nothing  
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No meaning there she closed the Book  
and slept  
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Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun  
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy,  
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Hosanna in the highest yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be  
palms  
Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
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woke,  
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Merrily rang the bells and they were wed  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path

She knew not whence, a whisper on her ear,

She knew not what, nor loved she to be left  
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone  
What wld her then, that ere she enter'd,  
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter. Philip thought he knew  
Such doubts and fears were common to  
her state,

Being with child but when her child was  
born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,  
Then the new mother came about her  
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all in all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died

And where was Enoch? prosperously  
sail'd

The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting  
forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvest  
She slept across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world agun,  
The breath of heaven came continually  
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
bought

Quaint monsters for the market of those  
times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes

Less lucky her home-voyage. at first  
indeed

Thro' many a fur sea circle, day by day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her  
bows

Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
variable,

Then baffling, a long course of them; and  
last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless  
heavens

Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the  
night,

Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
spars,

These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea

Now want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing  
roots,

Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of  
palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern So the  
three,

Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content

For one, the youngest, hardly more than  
boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
wreck,

Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-  
life

They could not leave him After he was  
gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem,  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Lire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone  
In those two deaths he read God's warn-  
ing 'wait'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the  
lawns

And winding glades high up like ways to  
Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,

The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses

That coil'd around the stately stems, and  
ran

Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,  
All these he saw, but what he fain had  
seen

He could not see, the kindly human face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
Them myriad shriek of wheeling ocean fowl,  
The league long roller thundering on the reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all dry long

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices,  
The blaze upon the waters to the east,  
The blaze upon his island overhead,  
The blaze upon the waters to the west,  
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,

The ho lower bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,

So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms moved

Before him haunting him, or he himself  
Moved haunting people, things and places, known

Far in a darker isle beyond the line,  
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,

The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,

The peacock-jew tree and the lonely Hall,  
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,

The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,

And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,

Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells,

Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up

Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being every where

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,

Surely the man had died of solitude

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went

Year after year His hopes to see his own,  
And prize the sacred old familiar fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom

Came suddenly to an end Another ship  
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,

Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay

For since the mate had seen at early dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
The silent water slipping from the hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst away  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores

With clamour Downward from his mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
They knew not what and yet he led the way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran,  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them understand,

Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,

Scarce-credited at first but more and more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it  
And clothes they gave him and free passage home,

But oft he work'd among the rest and  
shook

His resolution from him None of these  
Came from his country, or could answer him,

If question'd, nought of what he cared to  
know

And still the voyage was with long delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy, but ever-  
more

His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, and beneath a clouded moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadow morning-  
breath

Of England, blown across her ghostly wall  
And that same morning officers and men  
Leried a kindly tax upon themselves,  
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it  
Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
Even in that harbour whence he sail'd  
before

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,  
But home and home—what home? had  
he a home?

His home, he walk'd Bright was that  
afternoon,

Sunny but chill, till drawn thro' either  
chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world  
in gray,

Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and  
right

Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage  
On the nigh naked tree the robin piped  
Disconsolate and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it  
down

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the  
gloom,

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
Flared on him, and he came upon the  
place

Then down the long street having slowly  
stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the  
home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and  
his babes

In those far-off seven happy years were  
born,

But finding neither light nor murmur there  
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle)  
crept

Still downward thinking 'dead or dead  
to me'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he  
went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,

So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone, but he  
was gone

Who kept it, and his widow Mirram  
Lane,

With daily dwindling profits held the  
house,

A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men  
There Enoch rested silent many days

But Mirram Lane was good and garru-  
lous,

Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,

Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so  
bow'd,

So broken—all the story of his house  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the  
birth

Of Philip's child and o'er his counte-  
nance

No shadow past, nor motion any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the  
tale

Less than the teller—only when she closed  
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and  
lost'

He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost,'  
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
again,  
'If I might look on her sweet face again  
And know that she is happy' So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,

At evening when the dull November day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill  
There he sat down gazing on all below,  
There did a thousand memories roll upon  
him,

Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,

Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary life

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,

The latest house to landward, but be-  
hind,

With one small gate that open'd on the  
waste,

Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd

And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk

Of shingle, and a walk divided it  
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and

stole  
Up by the wall, behind the yew, and

thence  
That which he better might have shunn'd,  
if griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board

Sparkled and shone, so genial was the  
hearth

And on the right hand of the hearth he  
saw

Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,

Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees,

And o'er her second father stooped a girl,  
A later but a lofter Annic Lee,

Fair-haired and tall, and from her lifted  
hand

Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy

arms,  
Caught it and ever miss'd it, and they

laugh'd;  
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw

The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,

But turning now and then 'to speak with  
him

Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,

And saying that which pleased him, for  
he smiled

Now when the dead man came to life  
beheld

His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe

Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the

happiness,  
And his own children tall and beautiful,

And him, that other reigning in his place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's

love,—  
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him

all,  
Because things seen are mightier than

things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,

and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,

Which in one moment, like the blast of  
doom,

Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate under

foot,  
And feeling all along the garden wall,

Lest he should swoon and tumble and be  
found,

Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd

'Too hard to bear' why did they take  
me thence?

O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! and me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know  
Help me not to break in upon her peace  
My children too! must I not speak to  
these?

They know me not I should betray  
myself

Never No father's kiss for me—the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my  
son!

There speech and thought and nature  
fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced, but when he rose  
and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he  
went

Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know'

He was not all unhappy His resolve  
Uphore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
more

Prayer from a living source within the  
will,

And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul 'This miller's  
wife'

He said to Miriam 'that you spoke about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives?'

'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear  
enow!'

If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,

Why, that would be her comfort,' and  
he thought

'After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
know,

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live  
Almost to all things could he turn his  
hand

Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stunted commerce of  
those days,

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself  
Yet since he did but labour for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life  
in it

Whereby the man could live, and as the  
year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
came

Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do no  
more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last his  
bed

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully  
For sure no glazier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life  
approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of  
all

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kind-  
lier hope

On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said  
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead'



'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear him talk !

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round '

'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on the book '

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her, 'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'

'Know him?' she said 'I knew him far away

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street,

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he '

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her, 'His head is low, and no man cares for him

I think I have not three days more to live, I am the man ' At which the woman gave A half incredulous, half-hysterical cry

'You Arden, you ' nay,—sure he was a foot

Higher than you be ' Enoch said again 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am,

My grief and solitude have broken me, Nevertheless, know you that I am he Who married—but that name has twice been changed—

I married her who married Philip Ray Sit, listen ' Then he told her of his voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back, His gazing in on Annie, his resolve, And how he kept it. As the woman heard,

Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears, While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly To rush abroad all round the little haven, Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes, But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,

Saying only 'See your bairns before you go' Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung

A moment on her words, but then replied

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die Sit down again, mark me and understand, While I have power to speak I charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died Blessing her, praying for her, loving her, Save for the bar between us, loving her As when she laid her head beside my own And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw So like her mother, that my latest breath Was spent in blessing her and praying for her

And tell my son that I died blessing him And say to Philip that I blest him too, He never meant us any thing but good But if my children care to see me dead, Who hardly knew me living, let them come,

I am their father, but she must not come, For my dead face would vex her after-life And now there is but one of all my blood Who will embrace me in the world to-be This hair is his she cut it off and gave it, And I have borne it with me all these years

And thought to bear it with me to my grave,

But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,

My babe in bliss wherefore when I am gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort her

It will moreover be a token to her, That I am he '

He ceased, and Miriam Lane Made such a voluble answer promising all, That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again She promised

Then the third night after this, While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale, And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
abroad  
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail!  
I am saved,' and so fell back and spoke  
no more

So past the strong heroic soul away  
And when they buried him the little port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral

## THE BROOK

HERE, by this brook, we parted, I to the  
East

And he for Italy—too late—too late  
One whom the strong sons of the world  
despise,

For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and  
share,

And mellow metres more than cent for  
cent;

Nor could he understand how money  
breeds,

Thought it a dead thing; yet himself  
could make

The thing that is not as the thing that  
is

O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we  
say,

Of those that held their heads above the  
crowd,

They flourish'd then or then, but life in  
him

Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
touch'd

On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist of  
green,

And nothing perfect yet the brook he  
loved,

For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neigherry  
air

I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
To me that loved him, for 'O brook,'  
he says,

'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his  
rhyme,

'Whence come you?' and the brook, why  
not? replies

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
worn out,

Travelling to Naples There is Darnley  
bridge,

It has more ivy, there the river, and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
river meet

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow weed and mallow

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook  
or bird,

Old Philip, all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer  
grass

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever

'O darling Katie Willows, his one  
child'  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek,  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not  
coarse,  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand,  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good  
turn,  
Her and her far off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart  
with her  
For here I came, twenty years back—the  
week  
Before I parted with poor Edmund, crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins  
then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And push'd at Philip's garden gate The  
gate,  
Half parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,  
Stuck, and he clamour'd from a case-  
ment, "Run"  
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran she  
moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple blossom, blushing for a boon  
  
'What was it? less of sentiment than  
sense  
Had Katie, not illiterate, nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
thropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the  
Deed.

'She told me She and James had  
quarrell'd Why?  
What cause of quarrel? None, she said,  
no cause,  
James had no cause but when I prest  
the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering jea-  
lousies  
Which anger'd her Who anger'd James?  
I said  
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from  
mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot  
Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
If James were coming "Coming every  
day,"  
She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short,  
And James departed next with him and  
her"  
How could I help her? "Would I—was  
it wrong?"  
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she  
spoke)  
"O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
And even while she spoke, I saw where  
James  
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-  
sweet

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake'  
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm full willingly he rose  
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling  
lanes  
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went  
He praised his land, his horses, his  
machines,  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs,  
his dogs,  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea  
hens,

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own  
deserts.

Then from the plumpive mother's teat he  
took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming  
each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom  
they were

Then crost the common into Darnley  
chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer In copse  
and fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail

Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and  
said

"That was the four-year-old I sold the  
Squire"

And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at  
grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he  
ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was  
mad,

But he stood firm, and so the matter  
hung,

He gave them line and five days after  
that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something  
more,

But he stood firm, and so the matter  
hung,

He knew the man, the colt would fetch  
its price,

He gave them line and how by chance  
at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)

He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew  
him in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart with  
ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
Jilt,

Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,

And with me Philip, talking still, and so  
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling  
sun,

And following our own shadows thrice  
as long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
door,

Arrived and found the sun of sweet con-  
tent

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all thing  
well

I sterl by lawns and grassy plots,

I slide by hazel covers,

I move the sweet forget me nots  
That grow for happy lovers

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows,  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses,  
I linger by my shingly bars,  
I loiter round my cresses,

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever

Yes, men may come and go, and these  
are gone,

All gone My dearest brother, Edmund,  
sleeps,

Not by the well-known stream and rustic  
spire,

But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi, sleeps in peace and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
words

Remains the lean P W on his tomb.

I scraped the lichen from it Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in April autumns All  
are gone.'

So Lawrence Ayler, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his  
mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the  
brook

A tansured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute On a sudden a  
low breath

Of tender air made tremble in the  
hedge

The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
rings,

And he look'd up There stood a maiden  
near,

Waiting to pass In much amaze he  
stared

On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit with-  
in

Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you  
from the farm?'

'Yes' answer'd she 'Pray stay a little  
pardon me,

What do they call you?' 'Katie' 'That  
were strange

What surname?' 'Willows' 'No' '  
'That is my name'

Indeed' and here he look'd so self-  
perplexed,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,  
till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he  
wakes,

Who feels a glimmering strangeness in  
his dream

Then looking at her, 'Too happy, fresh  
and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best  
bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your  
name

About these meadows, twenty years ago'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie,  
'we came back

We bought the farm we tenanted before  
Am I so like her? so they said on board  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come  
with me

My brother James is in the harvest-field  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come  
in'

## AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames, and, gilded dust,  
our pride

Looks only for a moment whole and  
sound;

Like that long-burned body of the king,  
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of  
heaven,

Slept into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I  
saw

Sunning himself in a waste field alone—  
Old, and a mine of memories—who had  
served,

Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
And been himself a part of what he told

SIR AYLMEY AYLMEY, that mighty  
man,

The county God—in whose capricious  
hall,

Hung with a hundred shields, the family  
tree

Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
king—

Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the  
spire,

Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry  
gates

And swang besides on many a windy  
sign—

Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head

Saw from his windows nothing save his  
own—  
What lovelier of his own had he than  
her,  
His only child, his Lanth, whom he loved  
As heiress and not heir regretfully?  
But 'he that marries her marries her  
name'  
This first somewhat soothed himself and  
wife,  
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
Inspid as the Queen upon a card,  
Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
more  
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
corn,  
Little about it stirring save a brook!  
A sleepy land, where under the same  
wheel  
The same old rut would deepen year by  
year,  
Where almost all the village had one  
name;  
Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the  
Hall  
And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
Thrice over, so that Rectory and Hall,  
Bound in an immemorial intimacy;  
Were open to each other, tho' to dream  
That Love could bind them closer well  
had made  
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up  
With horror, worse than had he heard  
his priest  
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men  
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the  
land

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
it so,  
Somewhere beneath his own low range  
of roofs,  
Have also set his many-shielded tree?  
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
once  
When the red rose was redder than itself,  
And York's white rose as red as Lancas-  
ter's,

With wounded pence which each had  
prick'd to death  
'Not proven' Averill said, or laughingly  
'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n  
or no,  
What cared he? what, if other or the  
same?  
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself  
But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
With Averill, and a year or two before  
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
By one low voice to one dear neighbour-  
hood,  
Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
claim  
A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
That shook the heart of Edith hearing  
him

Sanguine he was, a but less vivid hue  
Than of that islet in the chestnut bloom  
Flamed in his cheek, and eager eyes,  
that still  
Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
beam'd,  
Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
Their best and brightest, when they dwell  
on hers,  
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else  
But subject to the season or the mood,  
Shone like a mystic star between the less  
And greater glory varying to and fro,  
We know not wherefore, bounteously  
made,  
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch  
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a  
day,  
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light  
And these had been together from the  
first  
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,  
hers  
So much the boy foreran, but when his  
date  
Doubled her own, for want of playmates,  
he  
(Since Averill was a decad and a half  
His elder, and their parents underground)  
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and  
roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the prone  
     swing,  
 Made blossom-bill or dusy chin, or  
     ranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it  
     green  
 In living letters, told her fairy tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
     grass,  
 The little dells of cowslip, fury palms,  
 The petty marestail forest, fury pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fury arrows um'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting make be-  
     lieves  
 For Edith and himself or else he forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
     wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true  
     love  
 Crown'd after trial, sketches rude and  
     faint  
 But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale  
 And thus together, save for college times  
 Or Temple eaten terms, a couple, fur  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
     grew  
 And more and more, the maiden woman-  
     grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill, there,  
     when first  
 The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
 That soon should wear the garland, there  
     again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd,  
     lastly there  
 At Christmas, ever welcome at the Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
     youth  
 Broke with a phosphorescence charming  
     even  
 My lady, and the Baronet yet had laid  
 No bar between them dull and self-  
     involved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his  
     height  
 With half allowing smiles for all the  
     world,  
 And mighty courteous in the main—his  
     pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walking  
     with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
     they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Two-footed at the limit of his chin,  
 Roaring to make a third and how should  
     Love,  
 Whom the cross lightnings of four chance  
     met eye,  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
 Seldom, but when he does, Master of all

So these young hearts not knowing that  
     they loved,  
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
 Between them, nor by plight or broken  
     ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
 By Averill his, a brother's love, that  
     hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
     peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
 Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour  
     by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and  
     drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the  
     brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
 By sallowy rims, arose the labourers'  
     homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other, huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
     bloom

Her art, her hand, her counsel all had  
 wrought  
 About the n here was one that, summer  
 blanch'd,  
 Was parcel leaved with the traveller's-  
 joy  
 In Autumn, parcel my-clad; and here  
 The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
 hearth  
 Broke from a tower of vine and honey-  
 suckle.  
 One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine crown with  
 stars  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflower  
 About it; this, a misty-way on earth,  
 Like vision in the Northern dreamer's  
 heavens,  
 A lily avenue climbing to the doors,  
 One, almost to the martin haunted eaves  
 A summer huri'd deep in lollyhocks,  
 Each, its own charm, and Edith's every-  
 where;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him,  
 He but less loved than Edith of her  
 poor  
 For she—so lowly lovely and so loving,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
 Rose from the clay it worl'd in as she  
 past,  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing  
 by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor  
 roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than them-  
 selves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored,  
 He, loved for her and for himself A  
 grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the  
 heart,  
 A childly way with children, and a laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the  
 girl,

T

Nursing a child, and turning to the  
 warmth  
 The tender pink five bearded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper  
 'Bless,  
 God bless 'em marriages are made in  
 Heaven'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to  
 her  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly  
 Scar'd by the close ecliptic was not fair,  
 Furer his talk, a tongue that ruled the  
 hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful so when first he  
 dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron 'Good' my lady's kinsman!  
 good'  
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
 To listen unawares they flitted off,  
 Busying themselves about the flowerage  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
 which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those  
 days  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his  
 life  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,  
 Hated him with a momentary hate  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was  
 he  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only  
 shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on everyone  
 And most on Edith like a storm he  
 came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm  
 he went

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return

L



When others had been tested) there was  
one,

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it  
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
itself

Fine as ice ferns on January pines  
Made by a breath I know not whence  
at first,

Nor of what race, the work, but as he told  
The story, storming a hill fort of thieves  
He got it, for their captain after fight,  
His comrades having fought their last  
below,

Was climbing up the valley, at whom  
he shot

Down from the beetling crag to which he  
clung

Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
This dagger with him, which when now  
admired

By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,  
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
Tost over all her presents petulantly  
And when she show'd the wealthy scab  
bard, saying

'Look what a lovely piece of workman-  
ship!'

Slight was his answer 'Well—I care not  
for it'

Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
his hand,

'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'

'But would it be more gracious' ask'd  
the girl

'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No'st'd he

'Me?—but I cared not for it O pardon  
me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself'

'Take it' she added sweetly, 'tho' his  
gift,

For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
I care not for it either,' and he said

'Why then I love it' but Sir Aylmer  
past,

And neither loved nor liked the thing he  
heard

The next day came a neighbour  
Blues and reds

They talk'd of blues were sure of it, he  
thought

Then of the latest fox—where started—  
kill'd

In such a bottom 'Peter! d the brush,  
My Peter, first' and did Sir Aylmer know  
That great pooh pitten fellow had been  
caught?

Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
hand

And rolling as it were the substance of it  
Between his palms a moment up and  
down—

'The birds were warm, the birds were  
warm upon him.

We have him now' and had Sir Aylmer  
heard—

Nay, but he must—the hand was ringing  
of it—

This blacksmith border-marriage—one  
they knew—

Raw from the nursery—who could trust  
a child?

That cursed France with her equalities'

And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially

With nearing cheer and lowered accent)  
think—

For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise  
To let that handsome fellow Astrill walk

So freely with his daughter? people  
talk'd—

The boy might get a notion into him,

The girl might be entangled ere she knew

Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stifening  
spoke

'The girl and boy, Sir, know their differ-  
ences!'

'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch'  
and he, 'Enough,

More than enough, Sir' I can guard my  
own'

They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
watch'd

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
house

Had fallen first, was Edith that came  
night,

Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough  
 piece  
 Of early rigid colour, under which  
 Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon  
 him  
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd He, as  
 one  
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant,  
 her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,  
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd,  
 And, like a beast hard-riden, breathing  
 hard  
 'Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,  
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with  
 her,  
 The sole succeder to their wealth, their  
 lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
 Their child ' 'Our child ' ' 'Our  
 heiress ' ' 'Ours!' for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
 Her sicklier iteration Last he said,  
 'Boy, mark me!' for your fortunes are to  
 make  
 I swear you shall not make them out of  
 mine  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised on  
 her,  
 Perplexed her, made her half forget herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and us—  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that  
 this—  
 Else I withdraw favour and countenance  
 From you and yours for ever—shall you  
 do  
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall not  
 see her—  
 No, you shall write, and not to her, but  
 me  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,  
 And after look'd into yourself, you find

That you meant nothing—as indeed you  
 know  
 That you meant nothing Such a match  
 as this '  
 Impossible, prodigious ' ' These were  
 words,  
 As meted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
 Never oh never,' for about as long  
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
 crying  
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like a  
 dog ,  
 Hence ' ' with a sudden execration drove  
 The footstool from before him, and arose;  
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth  
 that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but  
 now,  
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
 Vext with unworthy madness, and de-  
 form'd

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the  
 land,  
 Went Leolin, then, his passions all in  
 flood  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,  
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
 ear  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed

The man was his, had been his father's,  
 friend  
 He must have seen, himself had seen it  
 long,  
 He must have known, himself had known  
 besides,  
 He never yet had set his daughter forth  
 Here in the woman-markets of the west,  
 Where our Caucasians let themselves be  
 sold  
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
 Leolin to him  
 ' Brother, for I have loved you more as  
 son  
 Than brother, let me tell you I myself—  
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?  
 Jilted I was I say it for your peace  
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
 shame  
 The woman should have borne, humili-  
 ated,  
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life,  
 Till after our good parents past away  
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again to  
 grow  
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you  
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
 Loves you I know her the worst  
 thought she has  
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand  
 She must prove true for, brother, where  
 two fight  
 The strongest wins, and truth and love  
 are strength,  
 And you are happy let her parents be '  
  
 But Leolin cried out the more upon  
 them—  
 Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,  
 wealth,  
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth  
 enough was theirs  
 For twenty matches Were he lord of  
 this,  
 Why twenty boys and girls should marry  
 on it,  
 And forty blest ones bless him, and him-  
 self  
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier He be-  
 lieved

This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon  
 made  
 The harlot of the cities nature crost  
 Was mother of the foul adulteries  
 That saturate soul with body Name,  
 too! name,  
 Their ancient name! they *might* be  
 proud; its worth  
 Was being Edith's Ah how pale she  
 had look'd  
 Darling, to-night! they must have rated  
 her  
 Beyond all tolerance These old pheasant  
 lords,  
 These partridge-breeders of a thousand  
 years,  
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
 doing nothing  
 Since Egbert—why, the greater their  
 disgrace!  
 Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!  
 Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,  
 With such a vantage ground for nobleness!  
 He had known a man, a quintessence of  
 man,  
 The life of all—who madly loved—and he,  
 Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,  
 Had noted his life out, and made an end  
 He would not do it! her sweet face and  
 faith  
 Held him from that but he had powers,  
 he knew it  
 Back would he to his studies, make a name,  
 Name, fortune too the world should ring  
 of him  
 To sname these mouldy Aylmers in their  
 graves  
 Chancellor, or what is greatest would he  
 be—  
 ' O brother, I am grieved to learn your  
 grief—  
 Give me my flogging, and let me say my say '  
  
 At which, like one that sees his own  
 excess,  
 And easily forgives it as his own,  
 He laugh'd, and then was mute, but  
 presently  
 Wept like a storm and honest Averill  
 seeing

How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
 fetch'd  
 His richest beeswing from a binn reserved  
 For binquets, praised the waning red, and  
 told  
 The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of  
 age—  
 Then drank and past it; till at length the  
 two,  
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed  
 That much allowance must be made for  
 men  
 After an angry dream this kindlier glow  
 Faded with morning, but his purpose held

Yet once by night again the lovers met,  
 A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
 That darken'd all the northward of her  
 Hall

Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest  
 In agony, she promised that no force,  
 I ersuasion, no, nor death could alter her  
 He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
 Labour for his own Edith, and return  
 In such a sunlight of prosperity  
 He should not be rejected 'Write to  
 me!

They loved me, and because I love their  
 child

They hate me there is war between us,  
 dear,

Which breaks all bonds but ours, we  
 must remain

Sacred to one another' So they talk'd,  
 Poor children, for their comfort the wind  
 blew,

The rain of heaven, and their own bitter  
 tears,

Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,  
 mixt

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
 In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine

So Leolin went, and as we task our-  
 selves

To learn a language known but smatter-  
 ingly

In phrases here and there at random,  
 toil'd

Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
 That codeless myriad of precedent,  
 That wilderness of single instances,  
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
 May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
 fame

The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's  
 room,

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
 scurrilous tale,—

Old scandals buried now seven decads deep  
 In other scandals that have lived and died,  
 And left the living scandal that shall die—  
 Were dead to him already, bent as he was  
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong in  
 hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labour he,  
 Churier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
 Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
 Beside the river-bank and then indeed  
 Harder the times were, and the hands of  
 power

Were bloodier, and the according hearts  
 of men

Secm'd harder too, but the soft river-  
 breeze,

Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose  
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering

His former talks with Edith, on him  
 breathed

Far purer in his rushings to and fro,  
 After his books, to flush his blood with  
 air,

Then to his books again My lady's  
 cousin,

Half sickening of his pension'd afternoon,  
 Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
 Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,  
 Had golden hopes for France and all  
 mankind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at  
 home

With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
 And fain had haled him out into the  
 world,

And ar'd him there his nearer friend  
 would say

'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it  
 snap'

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger  
 forth  
 From where his worldless heart had kept  
 it warm,  
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight  
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
 him  
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise  
 For heart, I think, help'd head her  
 letters too,  
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he  
 saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
 Her worldly wise begetters, plagued them  
 selves

To sell her, those good parents, for her  
 good

Whatever eldest born of rank or wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him they  
 lured

Into their net made pleasant by the bruts  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo  
 So month by month the noise about their  
 doors,

And distant blaze of those dull banquets,  
 made

The nightly wiper of their innocent hare  
 Falter before he took it All in vain  
 Sullen, defiant, plying, wroth, return'd  
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slept o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
 With rumour, and became in other fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords but those at  
 home,

As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward the  
 death,

Narrow'd her goings out and comings in,  
 Forbad her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealthier  
 farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the  
 poor

They barr'd her yet she bore it - yet her  
 cheek

Kept colour wondrous ! but, O mystery !  
 What amulet drew her down to that old  
 oak,

So old, that twenty years before, a part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of John—  
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now

The broken base of a black tower, a cove  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
 spry

There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure trove,  
 Burst his own wryvern on the seal, and read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and halter  
 gave

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
 The letter which he brought, and swore  
 beside

To play their go between as heretofore  
 Nor let them know themselves betray'd,  
 and then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
 went

Hating his own lean heart and miserable

Thenceforward oft from out a despot  
 dream

The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
 brush'd

Thro' the dim meadow toward his  
 treasure trove,  
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—  
 who made

A downward crescent o' her mimic mouth,  
 Listless in all despondence,—read, and  
 tore,

As if the living passion symbol'd there  
 Were living nerves to feel the rent, and  
 burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of  
 scorn

In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
Hopeless of answer than tho' Averill wrote  
And bad him with good heart sustain  
himself—

All would be well—the lover heeded not,  
But passionately restless came and went,  
And rustling once at night about the place,  
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
Raging return'd nor was it well for her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,  
Watch'd even there, and one was set to  
watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings once  
indeed,

Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
in her,

She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
Not knowing what possess'd him that  
one kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth,  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hopes returning rose and then  
ensued

A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
Or ordeal by kindness, after this  
He seldom crost his child without a sneer,  
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-  
nies

Never one kindly smile, one kindly word  
So that the gentle creature shut from all  
Her charitable use, and face to face  
With twenty months of silence, slowly lost  
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life  
Last, some low fever ranging round to spy  
The weakness of a people or a house,  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or  
men,

Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—  
Save Christ as we believe him—found the  
girl

And flung her down upon a couch of fire,  
Where careless of the household faces near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light may soul  
to soul

Strike thro' a finer element of her own?  
So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or  
why

That night, that moment, when she named  
his name,

Did the keen shriek 'Yes love, yes, Edith,  
yes,'

Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
woke,

And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
trembling,

His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a  
flyer

Nor knew he wherefore he had made the  
cry,

And being much befool'd and idioted  
By the rough amity of the other, sank  
As into sleep again The second day,  
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
Found a dead man, a letter edged with  
death

Beside him, and the dagger which h'mself  
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's  
blood

'From Edith' was engraven on the blade

Then Averill went and gazed upon his  
death

And when he came again, his flock be-  
lieved—

Beholding how the years which are not  
Time's

Had blasted him—that many thousand  
days

Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of  
the first,

And being used to find her pastor texts,  
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying  
him

To speak before the people of her child,  
And fixt the Sabbath Darkly that day  
rose

Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
woods

Was all the life of it, for hard on these,  
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens  
Stifled and chill'd at once, but every roof  
Sent out a listener many too had known  
Edith among the hamlets round, and  
since

The parents' harshness and the hapless  
loves

And double death were widely murmur'd,  
left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
tabernacle,

To hear him, all in mourning these, and  
those

With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
Or kerchief, while the church,—one  
night, except

For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,  
—made

Still paler the pale head of him, who  
tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either  
grave

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
Averill,

His face magnetic to the hand from which  
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd  
thro'

His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse  
'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate !'

But lapsed into so long a pause again

As half amazed half frightened all his flock  
Then from his height and loneliness of  
grief

Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry  
heart

Against the desolations of the world

Never since our bad earth became one  
sea,

Which rolling o'er the palaces of the  
proud,

And all but those who knew the living  
God—

Eight that were left to make a purer  
world—

When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
thunder, wrought

Such waste and havock as the idolatres,  
Which from the low light of mortality  
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of  
Heavens,

And worshipt their own darkness in the  
Highest?

'Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy  
brute Baal,

And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed  
thy God

Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
Baal

The babe shall lead the lion Surely now  
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine  
own lusts !—

No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—  
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing  
lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
And tittle scrolls and gorgeous heraldries  
In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
God

Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for him, for  
thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
Is wounded to the death that cannot die,  
And tho' thou numberest with the followers  
Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow  
me"

Thee therefore with His light about thy  
feet,

Thee with His message ringing in thine  
ears,

Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from  
Heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty  
God,

Count the more base idolater of the two,  
Crueller as not passing thro' the fire  
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro'  
the smoke

The blight of low desires—darkening  
thine own  
To thine own likeness, or if one of these,  
Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and  
fair—  
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one  
By those who most have cause to sorrow  
for her—  
Fairer than Rachel by the paly well,  
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she  
seem'd,  
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden  
light  
For so mine own was brighten'd where  
indeed  
The roof so lowly but that beam of  
Heaven  
Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
whose the babe  
Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
of shame  
The common care whom no one cared  
for, leapt  
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
As with the mother he had never known,  
In gambols, for her fresh and innocent  
eyes  
Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
That all neglected places of the field  
Broke into nature's music when they saw  
her  
Low was her voice, but won mysterious  
way  
Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder  
one  
Was all but silence—free of alms her  
hand—  
The hand that robed your cottage-walls  
with flowers  
Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones,  
How often placed upon the sick man's  
brow  
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow  
smooth!  
Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
not?  
One burthen and she would not lighten it?

One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled  
out,  
How sweetly would she glide between  
your wraths,  
And steal you from each other! for she  
walk'd  
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of  
love,  
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!  
And one—of him I was not bid to  
speak—  
Was always with her, whom you also  
knew  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy  
love  
And these had been together from the  
first,  
They might have been together till the  
last  
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
sorely tried,  
May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
Without the captain's knowledge hope  
with me  
Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
with shame?  
Nor mure the fault, if losing both of these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
"My house is left unto me desolate!"  
While thus he spoke, his hearers wept,  
but some,  
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than  
those  
That knit themselves for summer shadow,  
scowl'd  
At their great lord He, when it seem'd  
he saw  
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but  
fork'd  
Of the near storm, and aiming at his  
head,  
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-  
like,  
Erect but when the preacher's cadence  
flow'd  
Softening thro' all the gentle attributes  
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd  
his face,



Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
mouth,  
And 'O pray God that he hold up' she  
thought  
'Or surely I shall shame myself and him'

'Nor yours the blame—for who beside  
your hearths  
Can take her place—if echoing me you  
cry

"Our house is left unto us desolate"?  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou  
known,

O thou that stonest, hadst thou under  
stood

The things belonging to thy peace and  
ours!

Is there no prophet but the voice that  
calls

Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re  
pent"?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the  
broad

Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet to  
us?

Is there no stoning save with flint and  
rock?

Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—

No desolation but by sword and fire?

Yes, as your moanings witness, and my-  
self

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss

Give me your prayers, for he is past your  
prayers,

Not past the living fount of pity in  
Heaven

But I that thought myself long-suffering,  
meek,

Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the  
words

Have twisted back upon themselves, and  
mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud—I  
wish'd my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—

Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
To inflame the tribes but there—out  
yonder—earth

Lightens from her own central Hell—O  
there

The red fruit of an old idolatry—

The heads of chiefs and princes fall so  
fast,

They cling together in the ghastly sick—

The land all shambles—naked marriages

Flash from the bridge, and ever murder'd

France,

By shores that darken with the gathering  
wolf,

Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.

Is this a time to madden madness then?

Was this a time for these to flout their  
pride?

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense  
as those

Which hid the Holiest from the people's  
eyes

Ere the great death, shroud this great sin  
from all!

Doubtless our narrow world must canvass  
it

O rather pray for those and pity them,

Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd,  
bring

Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the  
grave—

Who broke the bond which they desired  
to break,

Which else had link'd their race with  
times to come—

Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
purity,

Grossly contriving their dear daughter's  
good—

Poor souls, and knew not what they did,  
but sat

Ignorant, devising their own daughters  
death!

May not that earthly chastisement suffice?

Have not our love and reverence left  
them bare?

Will not another take their heritage?

Will there be children's laughter in their  
hall

For ever and for ever, or one stone

Left on another, or is it a light thing

That I, their guest, their host, their  
ancient friend,

I made by these the last of all my race,  
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
cried  
Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
Their own traditions God, and slew the  
Lord,  
And left their memories a world's curse—  
“Behold,  
Your house is left unto you desolate?”

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no  
more  
Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
lessly,  
Her crumpled-up sorrow pain'd her, and a  
sense  
Of meanness in her unresisting life  
Then their eyes veal her, for on entering  
He had cast the curtains of their seat  
aside—  
Black velvet of the costliest—she herself  
Had seen to that. fain had she closed  
them now,  
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
Her husband inch by inch, but when she  
laid,  
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
His face with the other, and at once, as  
falls  
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
swoon'd  
Then her own people bore along the nave  
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre  
face  
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
years  
And her the Lord of all the landscape  
round  
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
out  
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
ways  
Stumbling across the market to his death,  
Unpitied, for he groped as blind, and  
seem'd  
Always about to fall, grasping the pews

And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
door,  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,  
Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
Save under pall with bearers In one  
month,  
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child,  
And when he felt the silence of his house  
About him, and the change and not the  
chang,  
And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors  
Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head  
Began to droop, to fall, the man became  
Imbecile, his one word was 'desolate,'  
Dead for two years before his death was  
he,  
But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped  
His keepers, and the silence which he felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child, nor wanted at his  
end  
The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds, nor from tender  
hearts,  
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd  
race,  
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave  
Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
down,  
And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
farms,  
And where the two contrived their  
daughter's good,  
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made  
his run,  
The hedgehog underneath the plantain  
bores,  
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there  
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

## SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred,  
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
 child—  
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
 years old  
 They, thinking that her clear germander  
 eye  
 Droopt in the giant factoryed city gloom,  
 Came, with a month's leave given them,  
 to the sea  
 For which his gains were dock'd, however  
 small  
 Small were his gains, and hard his work,  
 besides,  
 Their slender household fortunes (for the  
 man  
 Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep  
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
 Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-  
 ness,  
 And that one unctuous mouth which lured  
 him, rogue,  
 To buy strange shares in some Peruvian  
 mine  
 Now seaward bound for health they gain'd  
 a coast,  
 All sand and cliff and deep inrunning cave,  
 At close of day, slept, woke, and went  
 the next,  
 The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
 church,  
 To chapel, where a heated pulpiteer,  
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,  
 Announced the coming doom, and ful-  
 minated  
 Against the scarlet woman and her creed,  
 For sideways up he swung his arms, and  
 shriek'd  
 'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he  
 held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
 Were that great Angel, 'Thus with  
 violence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea,  
 Then comes the close' The gentle  
 hearted wife

Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;  
 He at his own but when the wordy storm  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced  
 the shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce  
 believed  
 (The sootfluke of so many a summer still  
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now on  
 cliff,  
 Lingered about the thymy promontories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
 And rosed in the east then homeward and  
 to bed  
 Where she, who kept a tender Christian  
 hope,  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
 Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
 'Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,'  
 Said, 'Love, forgive him' but he did not  
 speak,  
 And silenced by that silence by the wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died for  
 all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full  
 tide  
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
 foremost rocks  
 Touching, upjetted in sprits of wild sea  
 smoke,  
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and  
 fell  
 In vast sea-contractions—ever and anon  
 Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs  
 Heard thro' the living roar At this the  
 babe,  
 Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd  
 and woke  
 The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
 'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd, and  
 groaning said,

'Forgive' How many will say, "for-  
 give," and find  
 A sort of absolution in the sound

To hate a little longer ! No the sin  
 That neither God nor man can well forgive,  
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once  
 Is it so true that second thoughts are best ?  
 Not first, and third, which are a riper first ?  
 Too ripe, too late ! they come too late  
 for use  
 Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
 beast  
 Something divine to warn them of their  
 foes -  
 And such a sense, when first I fronted him,  
 Said, " Trust him not, " but after when  
 I came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
 less,  
 Fought with what seemed my own un-  
 charity,  
 Sat at his table ; drank his costly wines,  
 Made more and more allowance for his  
 fall ;  
 Went further, fool ! and trusted him with  
 all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
 Of dust and deskwork there is no such  
 mine,  
 None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
 Not making Ruin'd ! ruin'd ! the sea  
 roars  
 Ruin a fearful night !

'Not fearful, fair,'  
 said the good wife, 'if every star in  
 heaven  
 Can make it fair - you do but hear the tide  
 Had you all dreams ?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd  
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
 And I from out the boundless outer deep  
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
 Of those dark caves that run beneath the  
 cliffs.  
 I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
 bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
 upon it  
 In darkness then I saw one lovely star  
 larger and larger 'What a world,' I  
 thought,

"To live in !" but in moving on I found  
 Only the landward exit of the cave,  
 Bright with the sun upon the stream  
 beyond  
 And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand then out I slipt  
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
 As high as heaven, and every bird that  
 sings  
 And here the night-light flickering in my  
 eyes  
 Awoke me'

'That was then your dream,' she said,  
 'Not sad, but sweet'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
 'And mused upon it, drifting up the  
 stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
 The broken vision, for I dream'd that still  
 The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
 And that the woman walk'd upon the  
 brink.

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her  
 of it

"It came," she said, "by working in the  
 mines"

O then to ask her of my shares, I thought,  
 And ask'd, but not a word, she shook  
 her head

And then the motion of the current ceased,  
 And there was rolling thunder, and we  
 reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and  
 thorns,

But she with her strong feet up the steep  
 hill

Trod out a path I follow'd, and at top  
 She pointed seaward there a fleet of  
 glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
 That not one moment ceased to thunder,  
 past

In sunshine right across its track there lay,  
 Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
 Or what seem'd gold and I was glad at  
 first

To think that in our often ransack'd world  
Still so much gold was left, and then I  
fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splinter  
on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn them  
off,

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it)  
near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and  
vanish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly Now I see  
My dream was Life, the woman honest  
Work,

And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort  
him,

'You raised your arm, you tumbled down  
and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medicine  
in it,

And, breaking that, you made and broke  
your dream

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband,  
'yesterday

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
That which I ask'd the woman in my  
dream

Like her, he shook his head. "Show me  
the books!"

He dodged me with a long and loose  
account

"The books, the books!" but he, he could  
not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and death  
When the great Books (see Daniel seven  
and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant me  
well,

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
All over with the fat affectionate smile

That makes the widow lean "My dearest  
friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,"  
said he,

"And all things work together for the good  
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him  
—last

Gript my hand hard, and with God bless  
you went

I stood like one that had received a blow  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,

A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you then my  
eyes

Pursued him down the street, and far  
away,

Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple sliding of his

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said  
the good wife,

'So are we all but do not call him, love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved  
forgive

His gun is loose, for he that wrongs his  
friend

Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
about

A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd

And that drags down his life then comes  
what comes

Hereafter and he meant, he said he  
meant.

Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you  
well'

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew"—

Love, let me quote these lines, that you  
may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours—

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew,

So false, he partly took himself for true,  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart

was dry,  
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his  
eye;

Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain,

Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his  
 tool,  
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and  
 fool,  
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
 forged,  
 And snake-like slithered his victim ere he  
 gorged,  
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
 Arising, did his holy oil best,  
 Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
 Heaven,  
 To spread the Word by which himself  
 had thriven "  
 How like you this old satire?"

'Nay,' she said,  
 'I loathe it he had never kindly heart,  
 Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it  
 But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
 That altogether went to music? Still  
 It awed me'

Then she told it, having dream'd  
 Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,  
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour, lay,  
 And ever in it a low musical note  
 Swell'd up and died, and, as it swell'd,  
 a ridge  
 Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
 Grew with the growing note, and when  
 the note  
 Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
 those cliffs  
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as  
 that  
 Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no  
 more,  
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
 One after one and then the great ridge  
 drew,  
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
 And past into the belt and swell'd again  
 Slowly to music ever when it broke  
 The statues, king or saint, or founder fell,

Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin  
 left  
 Came men and women in dark clusters  
 round,  
 Some crying, 'Set them up' they shall  
 not fall!'   
 And others, 'Let them lie, for they have  
 fall'n'   
 And still they strove and wrangled and  
 she grieved  
 In her strange dream, she knew not why,  
 to find  
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
 With that sweet note, and ever as their  
 shrieks  
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the  
 crowd  
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd  
 their eyes  
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept  
 away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of  
 stone,  
 To the waste deeps together

'Then I fixt  
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among  
 the stars,—  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her  
 child  
 High up on one of those dark minster  
 fronts—  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I  
 woke,  
 And my dream awed me —well—but  
 what are dreams?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a  
 glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a  
 child'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's  
 roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antitabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)

Went both to make your dream but if  
there were

A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
about,

Why, that would make our passions far  
too like

The discords dear to the musician No—  
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns  
of heaven

True Devils with no ear they howl in tune  
With nothing but the Devil !

“ True ” indeed !

One of our town, but later by an hour  
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on  
the shore ,

While you were running down the sands,  
and made

The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow  
flap,

Good man, to please the child She  
brought strange news

Why were you silent when I spoke to  
night ?

I had set my heart on your forgiving him  
Before you knew We *must* forgive the  
dead.

‘ Dead ! who is dead ? ’

‘ The man your eye pursued  
A little after you had parted with him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease. ’

‘ Dead ? he ? of heart disease ? what heart  
had he

To die of ? dead ! ’

‘ Ah, dearest, if there be  
A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge him  
with,

His angel broke his heart But your  
rough voice

(You spoke so loud) has roused the child  
again

Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not  
sleep

Without her “ little birdie ” ? well then,  
sleep,

And I will sing you “ b rdie ”

Saying this,

The woman half turn'd round from him  
she loved,

Left him one hand, and reaching thro'  
the night

Her other, found (for it was close be  
side)

And half-embraced the basket cradle  
head

With one soft arm, which, like the plian'  
bough

That moving moves the nest and nestling,  
sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby song

What does little birdie say

In her nest at peep of day ?

Let me fly, says litt'e birdie,

Mother, let me fly away

Birdie, rest a little longer,

Till the little wings are stronger

So she rests a little longer,

Then she flies away

What does little baby say,

In her bed at peep of day ?

Baby says, like little birdie,

Let me rise and fly away

Baby, sleep a little longer,

Till the little limbs are stronger

If she sleeps a little longer,

Baby too shall fly away

‘ She sleeps let us too, let all evil,  
sleep

He also sleeps—another sleep than  
ours

He can do no more wrong forgive him,  
dear,

And I shall sleep the sounder ! ’

Then the man,

‘ His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to  
come

Yet let your sleep for this one night be  
sound

I do forgive him ! ’

‘ Thanks, my love,’ she said,

‘ Your own will be the sweeter,’ and they  
slept.

LUCRETIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold, for when the morning  
flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the  
less,

Yet often when the woman heard his foot  
Return from paces in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austerely, for—his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past  
To turn and ponder those three hundred  
scrolls

Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine  
She brook'd it not, but wrathful, petulant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and found  
a witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power,  
they said,

To lead an errant passion home again  
And this, at times, she mingled with his  
drink,

And thus destroy'd him, for the wicked  
broth

Confused the chemic labour of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the  
man's

Made havock among those tender cells,  
and check'd

His power to shape he loathed himself,  
and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mock'd him with returning calm,  
and cried.

'Storm in the night' for thrice I heard  
the rain

Rushing, and once the flash of a  
thunderbolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,  
and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
Gods, what dreams!

For thrice I waken'd after dreams Per-  
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking terrible' for it seem'd  
A void was made in Nature, all her bonds  
Crack'd, and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams

And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Running along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever that was mine, my dream, I  
knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland—but the  
next'

I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on  
earth,

And where it dash'd the reddening mea-  
dow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would  
show to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods  
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
round me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—  
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
out the breasts,

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a  
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty, and as I stared, a fire,  
The fire that left a roofless Ithon,  
Shot out of them and scorch'd me that  
I woke.



'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,  
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ?  
thine,  
Forgetful how my rich procemion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?

'Deity ? nay, thy worshippers My  
tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely Which of  
these  
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all ?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and  
scorn,  
Live the great life which all our greatest  
fain  
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves  
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry  
to thee  
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust  
of blood  
That makes a steaming slaughter house  
of Rome

'Ay, but I meant not thee, I meant  
not her,  
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and  
tempt  
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad,  
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
wept  
Her Deity false in human amorous tears,  
Nor whom her beardless apple arbiter  
Decided furest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Callopo to grace his golden verse—  
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow  
forth  
The all generating powers and genial heat

Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
thick blood  
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
are glad  
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of  
flowers  
Which things appear the work of mighty  
Gods

'The Gods' and if I go my work is  
left  
Unfinish'd—if I go The God-, who  
hunt  
The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a  
wind,  
Nor ever fills the least white star of  
snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to  
me  
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go The Gods, the  
Gods !  
If all be atoms, how then should the  
Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law ? My master  
held  
That Gods there are, for all men so  
believe  
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a trun  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless  
Meant ? I meant ?  
I have forgotten what I meant my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed

'Look where another of our Gods, the  
Sun,  
Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
Has mounted yonder ; since he never  
sware,  
Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
wretched man,

That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter, 'twas for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting  
ing be

Moan and the spit—nor knows he  
what he sees,

King of the East altho' he seem, and girt  
With some old fir and fragrance, slowly  
lies

His golden feet on these empurpled stairs  
That climb into the windy halls of  
heaven

And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And puts his greenish but a wail of pain,  
And here he waves upon a freezing orb  
That sun would gaze upon him to the  
his

And here upon a velvet eyelid fall'n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend  
in vain,

No thankful that his troubles are no  
more.

And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That man his soldiers may not quit the  
post

Allotted by the Gods but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he  
care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
once,  
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and  
sin

Past earthly (—), and gout and stone,  
that break

Body to and death, and palsy, death in-  
life,

And wretched age—and worst disease of  
all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully  
done,

And fleeing thro' the boundless universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it loved  
them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the  
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their rags  
and they

The breast, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me  
again,

Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
storm,

At random ravage? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and  
within

All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
men?

'But who was he, that in the garden  
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—

I or look! what is it? there? yon arbutus  
Totters, a noiseless rot underneath

Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and  
Faun,

And here an Oread—how the sun delights  
To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way  
runs

Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows, but him I proved impossible,  
Twy natured is no nature yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind

That ever butted his rough brother brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender  
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him, and  
she

Loathes him as well, such a precipitate  
heel,

Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle  
wing,

Whirls her to me but will she fling  
herself,

Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat  
foot nay,

Hide, hide them, million myrtled wilder-  
ness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do  
I wish—

What?—that the bush were leafless? or  
to whelm

All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
From childly wont and ancient use I  
call—

I thought I lived securely as yourselves—  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice, none  
No larger feast than under plane or pine  
With neighbours laid along the grass, to  
take

Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
Affirming each his own philosophy—  
Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life  
But now it seems some unseen monster  
lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
Wrenching it backward into his, and  
spoils

My bliss in being, and it was not great,  
For save when shutting reasons up in  
rhythm,

Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
Tired of so much within our little life,  
Or of so little in our little life—  
Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there  
an end—

And since the nobler pleasure seems to  
fade.

Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—  
What beast has heart to do it? And what  
man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph  
thus?

Not I, not he, who bears one name with  
her

Whose death blow struck the dateless  
doom of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in her  
veins,

She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless  
war,

Spout from the maiden fountain in her  
heart

And from it sprang the Commonwealth,  
which breaks

As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
Those blind beginnings that have made  
me man,

Dash them anew together at her will  
Thro' all her cycles—into man once more,  
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower  
But till this cosmic order everywhere  
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day  
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour  
perhaps

Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to him  
self,

But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
and fanes,

And even his bones long laid within the  
grave,

The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,  
My golden work in which I told a truth  
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
And numbs the Fury's ringlet snake, and  
plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
Shall stand ay, surely then it fails at  
last

And perishes as I must, for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
 Without one pleasure and without one  
 pain,

Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so they  
 win—

Thus—thus. the soul flies out and dies  
 in the air'

With that he drove the knife into his  
 side  
 She heard him raging, heard him fall,  
 run in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
 herself  
 As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back, fell  
 on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd he answer'd,  
 'Care not thou'  
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee  
 well!

## ✓ THE PRINCESS,

### A MEDLEY

#### PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day  
 Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
 Up to the people thither flock'd at noon  
 His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
 half

The neighbouring borough with their  
 Institute

Of which he was the patron I was  
 there

From college, visiting the son,—the son  
 A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
 Five others we were seven at Vivian  
 place.

And me that morning Walter show'd  
 the house,  
 Greek, set with busts from vases in the  
 hall  
 Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than  
 their names,  
 Grew side by side, and on the pavement  
 lay  
 Carved stones of the Abbey ruin in the  
 park,  
 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of  
 Time,  
 And on the tables every clime and age

Jumbled together, celts and calumets,  
 Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,  
 fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
 Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
 The cursed Malayan crease, and battle  
 clubs

From the isles of palm and higher on  
 the walls,

Between the monstrous horns of elk and  
 deer,

His own forefathers' arms and armour  
 hung

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at  
 Agincourt,

And that was old Sir Ralph's at As-  
 calon

A good knight he 'we keep a chronicle  
 With all about him'—which he brought,  
 and I

Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
 knights,

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and  
 kings

Who laid about them at their wills and  
 died;

And mixt with these, a lady, one that  
 arm'd

Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the  
gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from  
her walls

'O miracle of women,' said the book,  
'O noble heart who, being strait besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a  
soldier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd as  
lost—

Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—  
Broke with a blast of trumpets from the  
gate,

And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses'  
heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles of  
the wall,

And some were push'd with lances from  
the rock,

And part were drown'd within the whirl  
ing brook

O miracle of noble womanhood !'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle,  
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he  
said,

'To the Abbey there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro' the park strange was the  
sight to me,

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
sown

With happy faces and with holiday  
There moved the multitude, a thousand  
heads

The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts One rear'd a  
font of stone

And drew, from butts of water on the  
slope,

The fountain of the moment, playing,  
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded  
ball

Danced like a wisp and somewhat lower  
down

A man with knobs and wires and vials  
fired

A cannon Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields and here were tele-  
scopes

For azure views, and there a group of  
girls

In circle wroited, whom the electric shock  
Dishink'd with shrieks and laughter.  
round the lake

A little clock-work steamer praddling plied  
And shook the lilies perch'd about the  
knolls

A dozer angry models jetted steam  
A petty ruck ay ran a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fury parachute and past

And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations, so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science, other  
where

Pure sport a herd of boys with clamour  
bowl'd

And stump'd the wicket, babies roll'd  
about

Like tumbled fruit in grass, and men  
and mounds

Arranged a country dance, and flew thro  
light

And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over  
head

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from  
end to end

Strange was the sight and smacking of  
the time,

And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins High arch'd and ivy  
claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost  
they gave

The park, the crowd, the house, but all  
within

The sword was trim as any garden lawn

And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats and there was  
Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had  
wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied  
nook

Glow like a sunbeam . near his tomb a  
feast

Shone, silver set ; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them then the  
muden Aunt

Took this fair day for text and from it  
preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great ; but we, unworthier,  
told

Of college he had climb'd across the  
spikes,

And he had squeezed himself betwixt the  
bars,

And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs ;  
and one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common  
men,

But honeying at the whisper of a lord,  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads  
I saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which  
brought

My book to mind . and opening this I  
read

Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney then the tale of  
her

That drove her foes with slaughter from  
her walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and  
'Where,'

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman  
now ?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are thou-  
sands now

Such women, but convention beats them  
down

It is but bringing up , no more than that  
You men have done it - how I hate you  
all !

Ah, were I something great ! I wish I  
were

Some mighty poetess, I would shame you  
then,

That love to keep us children ! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would  
build

Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are  
taught ,

We are twice as quick !' And here she  
shook aside

The hand that play'd the patron with her  
curls

And one said smiling 'Pretty were the  
sight

If our old halls could change their sex,  
and flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for  
deans,

And sweet girl-graduates in their golden  
hair

I think they should not wear our rusty  
gowns,

But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or  
Ralph

Who shines so in the corner , yet I fear,  
If there were many Lillas in the brood,

However deep you might embower the  
nest,

Some boy would spy it '

At this upon the sword  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot .

'That's your light way ; but I would  
make it death

For any male thing but to peep at us '

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she  
laugh'd ,

A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her,  
she -

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon  
 her,  
 And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful  
 Puss,'  
 And swore he long'd at college, only  
 long'd,  
 All else was well, for she society  
 They boated and they cricketed, they  
 talk'd  
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics,  
 They lost their weeks, they vex'd the  
 souls of deans,  
 They rode, they betted, made a hundred  
 friends,  
 And caught the blossom of the flying  
 terms,  
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian place,  
 The little hearth-flower Lilia Thus he  
 spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection  
 'True,' she said,  
 'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd  
 us much  
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you  
 did'

She held it out, and as a parrot turns  
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for  
 harm,  
 So he with Lilia's Daintily she shriek'd  
 And wrung it 'Doubt my word again!'   
 he said.  
 'Come, listen! here is proof that you  
 were miss'd  
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read,  
 And there we took one tutor as to read  
 The hard-grained Muses of the cube and  
 square  
 Were out of season never man, I think,  
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he  
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
 And our long walks were stript as bare  
 as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail, often like as many girls—  
 Sick for the holies and the yews of home—  
 's many little trifling Liliases—play'd  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,

And *what's my thought* and *when* and  
*where* and *how*,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas'

She remember'd that  
 A pleasant game, she thought she liked  
 it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest  
 But these—what kind of tales did men  
 tell men,  
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain  
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips  
 And Walter nodded at me, 'He began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn, and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story Kind?  
 what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter'

'Kill him now,  
 The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'  
 Said Lilia, 'Why not now?' the maiden  
 Aunt

'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the  
 place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I  
 laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
 mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins, till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her  
 face

With colour) turn'd to me with 'As you  
 will,  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clam-  
 our'd he,  
 'And make her some great Princess, six  
 feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal, and be you  
 The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'  
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn'  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream —

Heroic seems our Princess as required—  
But something made to suit with Time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experi-  
ments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt  
them all—

This ~~was~~ a medley ! we should have him  
back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to do it  
for us

No matter we will say whatever comes  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space'

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd and the women  
sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pruses of the wind  
And here I give the story and the songs

i

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in  
face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern  
star

There lived an ancient legend in our  
house  
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire  
burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-  
told,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should  
know

The shadow from the substance, and that  
one

Should come to fight with shadows and  
to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or  
less,

An old and strange affection of the house  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as hereto-  
fore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head  
cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd  
'catalepsy'

My mother pitying made a thousand  
prayers,

My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness  
But my good father thought a king a king,  
He cared not for the affection of the house,  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and  
hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from  
the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade,  
betroth'd

To one, a neighbouring Princess she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old, and still from time  
to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the  
South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance,  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress, and all around them  
both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about  
their queen

But when the days drew nigh that I  
should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her these  
brought back

A present, a great labour of the loom,  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind



Besides, they saw the king, he took the  
 gifts,  
 He said there was a compact, that was  
 true  
 But then she had a will, was he to blame?  
 And maiden fancies, loved to live alone  
 Among her women, certain, would not  
 wed

That morning in the presence room I  
 stood  
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two  
 friends

The first, a gentleman of broken means  
 (His father's fault) but given to starts and  
 bursts

Of revel, and the last, my other heart,  
 And almost my half self, for still we moved  
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my  
 father's face  
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
 Inflamed with wrath he started on his  
 feet,  
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,  
 and rent  
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and  
 woof  
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he  
 sware  
 That he would send a hundred thousand  
 men,  
 And bring her in a whirlwind then he  
 chew'd  
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd  
 his spleen,  
 Communing with his captains of the war

At last I spoke 'My father, let me go  
 It cannot be but some gross error lies  
 In this report, this answer of a king,  
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable  
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once  
 seen,  
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than  
 fame,  
 May rue the bargain made' And Florian  
 said.  
 'I have a sister at the foreign court,

Who moves about the Princess; she, you  
 know,  
 Who wedded with a nobleman from thence  
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
 The lady of three castles in that land:  
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean'  
 And Cyril whisper'd 'Take me with you  
 too'

Then laughing 'what, if these weird  
 seizures come  
 Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
 To point you out the shadow from the  
 truth'

Take me I'll serve you better in a strait,  
 I grate on rusty hinges here' but 'No'  
 Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not,  
 we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
 In iron gauntlets break the council up'

But when the council broke, I rose and  
 past  
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the  
 town,  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her like-  
 ness out,  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying  
 bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees  
 What were those fancies? wherefore break  
 her troth?  
 Proud look'd the lips but while I medi-  
 tated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and  
 the shrieks  
 Of the wild woods together, and a Voice  
 Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
 win'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from  
 court

With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread  
 To hear my father's clamour at our backs  
 With Ho! from some bay-window shake  
 the night,  
 But all was quiet from the bastion'd  
 walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier. then we  
crost  
To a livelier land, and so by tilth and  
grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-  
ness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king

His name was Gamal, crack'd and  
small his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling  
wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines,  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we  
came,  
And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,'  
he said,  
Airng a snowy hand and signet gem,  
'All honour We remember love our-  
selves  
In our sweet youth there did a compact  
pass  
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—  
I think the year in which our olives  
fal'd  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my  
heart,  
With my full heart but there were  
widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche,  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this, with this our ban  
quets rang,  
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of  
talk;  
Nothing but this, my very ears were hot  
To hear them knowledge, so my daughter  
held,  
Was all in all they had but been, she  
thought,  
As children, they must lose the child,  
assume

The woman then, Sir, awful odes she  
wrote,  
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful, odes  
About this losing of the child, and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason these the women sang,  
And they that know such things—I sought  
but peace,  
No critic I—would call them master-  
pieces  
They master'd me At last she begg'd a  
boon,  
A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it and  
there,  
All wild to found an University  
For mudens, on the spur she fled, and  
more  
We know not,—only thus they see no  
men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
upon her  
As on a kind of paragon, and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to  
breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine but  
since  
(And I confess with right) you think me  
bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her,  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your  
chance  
Almost at naked nothing'

Thus the king,  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends.  
We rode  
Many a long league back to the North  
At last  
From hills, that look'd across a land of  
hope,  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties,

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine  
 host  
 To council, pled him with his richest  
 wines,  
 And show'd the late writ letters of the  
 king

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
 As blank as death in marble, then ex-  
 claim'd

Averting it was clear against all rules  
 For any man to go but as his brain  
 Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,  
 'Had given us letters, was he bound to  
 speak?

The king would bear him out,' and at  
 the last—

The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
 'No doubt that we might make it worth  
 his while

She once had past that way, he heard  
 her speak,

She scared him, life! he never saw the  
 like,

She look'd as grand as doomsday and as  
 grave

And he, he revered his liege lady there,  
 He always made a point to post with  
 mares,

His daughter and his housemaid were the  
 boys

The land, he understood, for mules about  
 Was till'd by women, all the swine were  
 sows,

And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,  
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed  
 in act,

Remembering how we three presented  
 Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
 feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's court  
 We sent mine host to purchase female  
 gear,

He brought it, and himself a sight to  
 shake

The midst of despair with laughter, help  
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden  
 plumes

We rustled him we gave a costly bribe  
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
 steeds,  
 And boldly ventured on the liberties

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
 And rode till midnight when the college  
 lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
 And linden alley then we past an arch,  
 Whereon a woman - statue rose with  
 wings

From four wing'd horses dark against the  
 stars,

And some inscription ran along the front,  
 But deep in shadow further on we gain'd  
 A little street half garden and half house;  
 But scarce could hear each other speak  
 for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers  
 falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
 Of fountains spouted up and showering  
 down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose  
 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
 Rapt in her song, and careless of the  
 snare

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven  
 and Earth

With constellation and with continent,  
 Above an entry riding in, we call'd,  
 A plump arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
 wench

Came running at the call, and help'd us  
 down

Then stopt a buxom hostess forth, and  
 sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
 gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
 In laurel her we ask'd of that and this,  
 And who were tutors 'Lady Blanche'  
 she said,

'And Lady Psyche' 'Which was  
 prettiest,  
 Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche' 'Hers  
 are we,'

One voice, we cried, and I sat down and wrote,  
 In such a hand as when a field of corn  
 Bows all its ears before the roaring East,  
 'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
 Your Highness would enroll them with  
 your own,  
 As Lady Psyche's pupils'

Thus I sent'd  
 The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
 And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes.

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn.  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd

To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,  
 so all

On some dark shore just seen that it was rich

## II

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
 We fell out, my wife and I,  
 O'er fell out I know not why,  
 And kiss'd again with tears  
 And blessings on the falling out  
 That all the more endears,  
 When we fell out with those we love  
 And kiss again with tears!  
 For when we came where lies the child  
 We lo't his other years,  
 There above the little grave  
 O there above the little grave,  
 We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress came

She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
 And zoned with gold, and now when  
 these were on,  
 And we as rich as moths from dusk  
 cocoons,  
 She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
 The Princess Idia waited out we paced

I first, and following thro' the porch that sang

All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with  
 lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
 Between the pillars, and with great urns  
 of flowers

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in  
 threes,

Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst,  
 And here and there on lattice edges lay  
 Or book or lute, but hastily we past,  
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall

There at a board by tome and paper sat,

With two tame leopards couch'd beside  
 her throne,

All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
 The Princess, liker to the inhabitant  
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
 Than our man's earth, such eyes were in  
 her head,

And so much grace and power, breathing  
 down

From over her arch'd brows, with every  
 turn

Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
 hands,

And to her feet She rose her height,  
 and said

'We give you welcome not without  
 redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
 The first-fruits of the stranger aftertime,  
 And that full voice which circles round  
 the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me  
 What are the ladies of your land so  
 tall?'

'We of the court' said Cyril. 'From  
 the court'

She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?'  
 and he

'The climax of his age I as tho' there were  
 One rose in all the world, your Highness  
 that,

He worships your ideal -' she replied

'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear

This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds  
would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of power,

Your language proves you still the child  
Indeed,

We dream not of him when we set our hand

To this great work, we purposed with  
ourselves

Never to wed You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and sling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men,  
that so,

Some future time, if so indeed you will  
You may with those self-styled our lords  
ally

Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with  
scale'

At those high words, we conscious of  
ourselves,

Perused the matting, then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as  
these

Not for three years to correspond with  
home,

Not for three years to cross the liberties,  
Not for three years to speak with any  
men,

And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards and 'Now,'  
she cried,

'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not  
Look, our hall'

Our statues!—not of those that men  
desire,

Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East, but  
she

That taught the Sabine how to rule, and  
she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene

That fought Aurelianus, and the Roman  
brows

Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and  
lose

Convention since to look on noble forms  
Made noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher O lift your natures  
up

Embrace our aims work out your free  
dom Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
scold'd

Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die Better not be at all  
Than not be noble Leave us you may  
go

To dry the Lady Psyche will bring  
The fresh arrivals of the week before,  
I or they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal back again to cross the court  
To Lady Psyche as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning  
doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the  
thatch,

A patient range of pupils, she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin wood,  
A quick brunette well moulded, falcon  
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers At her left, a child.  
In shining draperies, herded like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglais slept We sat the Lady glanced  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the  
dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears,' among the  
sedge,

'My sister' 'Comely, too, by all that's  
fair,'

Said Cyril 'O hush, hush!' and she  
began

'This world was once a fluid haze of  
light,

Till toward the centre set the sturvy tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast

The planet—then the monster, then the man.

Tattoo'd or wooded winter-clan in skins,  
 Raw from the prime and crushing down  
 his mate:

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and  
 here

Among the lowest

Thereupon she took  
 A bird's eye-view of all the ungracious  
 race,

Glanced at the legendary Amazon

As emblematic of a nobler age.

Apprised the Lycian custom, spoke of  
 those

That lay at war with Lar and Lucumo;  
 Ran down the Persian Grecian, Roman  
 lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
 How far from just, till warming with her  
 theme

She fulminated her scorn on Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on  
 Mahomet

With much contempt, and came to  
 chivalry

When some respect, however slight, was  
 paid

To woman, superstition all awry  
 However then commenced the dawn a  
 beam

Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise, fruit would follow Deep,  
 indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first had  
 dared

To leap the rotten piles of prejudice,  
 Dyoke their recks from custom, and  
 assert

None lordlier than themselves but that  
 which made

Woman and man She had founded,  
 they must build

Here might they learn whatever men were  
 taught

Let them not fear—some said their heads  
 were less

Some men's were small; not they the  
 least of men,

For often fineness compensated size

Besides the brain was like the hand, and  
 grew

With using, thence the man's, if more  
 was more,

He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field—some ages had been lost,  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious  
 names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in  
 truth

The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kafir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the  
 glebe.

But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman—and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others, arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others, arts of grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man  
 And, last not least, she who had left her  
 place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they  
 might grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the  
 blight

Of ancient influence and scorn

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future, 'everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the  
 hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummetts dropt for one to sound  
 the abyss

Of science, and the secrets of the mind  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous  
 Earth

Should bear a double growth of those  
 rare souls,

Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood  
 of the world'

She ended here, and beckon'd us the  
 rest

Parted, and, glowing full-faced welcome,  
 she

Began to address us, and was moving on  
In gratulation, till as when a boat  
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
her voice

Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she  
cried

'My brother' 'Well, my sister' 'O,'  
she said,

'What do you here? and in this dress?  
and these?

Why who are these? a wolf within the  
fold'

A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious  
to me'

A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all'

'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd  
'Wretched boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the  
gate,

LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
DEATH?

'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could  
think

The softer Adams of your Academe,  
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
As chanted on the blanching bones of  
men?'

'But you will find it otherwise' she said  
'You jest all jesting with edge tools I  
my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
The Princess' 'Well then, Psyche, take  
my life,

And nail me like a wessel on a grange  
For warning bury me beside the gate,  
And cut this epitaph above my bones,  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
All for the common good of womankind'*

'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having  
seen

And heard the Lady Psyche'

I struck in  
'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
truth,

Receive it, and in me behold the Prince  
Your countryman, affianced years ago  
To the Lady Ida here, for here she was,  
And thus (what other way was left) I  
came'

'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country  
none,

If any, this, but none. Whate'er I was  
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here  
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not  
breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how should  
I,

Who am not mine, say, live the thunder-  
bolt

Hangs silent but prepare I speak; it  
falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said. 'for that inscription  
there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein.  
Than in a clipper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit if more  
there be,

If more and rcted on, what follows? war,  
Your own work marr'd for this your  
Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and  
press

With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess  
judge

Of that' she said 'farewell, Sir—and  
to you

I shudder at the sequel, but I go'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-  
join'd,

'The fifth in line from that old Floran,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he  
fell,

And all else fled? we point to it, and  
we say,

The loyal warmth of Floran is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred  
veins'

'Are you that Psyche,' Floran added,  
'she

With whom I sang about the morning  
hills,

Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the  
purple fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen ? are  
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
brow,

To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming  
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams ? are  
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one ?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you  
now ?

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for  
whom

I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience '

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,  
'That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the  
king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that  
ancient ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern  
hills,

That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them ' look ' for such are these  
and I '

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,  
'to whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and  
the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you  
wept

That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet  
you wept

O by the bright head of my little niece,  
You were that Psyche, and what are  
you now ?

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,  
'The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
That ever crow'd for kisses '

'Out upon it !'  
She answer'd, 'peace ' and why should  
I not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind ?  
Him you call great he for the common  
weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
As I might slay this child, if good need  
were,

Slew both his sons and I, shall I, on  
whom

The secular emancipation turns  
Of half this world, be swerved from right  
to save

A prince, a brother ? a little will I yield  
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for  
you

O hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear  
My conscience will not count me fleck-  
less, yet—

Hear my conditions promise (otherwise  
You perish) as you came, to slip away  
To-day, to-morrow, soon it shall be  
said,

These women were too barbarous, would  
not learn,

They fled, who might have shamed us  
promise, all '

What could we else, we promised each,  
and she,

Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced

A to and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian, holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly  
said

'I knew you at the first tho' you have  
grown

You scarce have alter'd I am sad and  
glad

To see you, Florian I give thee to death  
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well ?

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd  
up

From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the  
hearth,



And far allusion, till the gracious dew  
 Began to glisten and to fall and while  
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a  
 voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady  
 Blanche'

Back started she, and turning round we  
 saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she  
 stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's colour) with her lips apart,  
 And all her thoughts as fair within her  
 eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas

So stood that same fur creature at the  
 door

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—you'  
 You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon  
 me

I heard, I could not help it, did not  
 wish

But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
 Nor think I bear that heart within my  
 breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death'  
 'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two  
 Were always friends, none closer, elm  
 and vine

But yet your mother's jealous tempera-  
 ment—

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse,  
 or prove

The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear  
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 My honour, these their lives' 'Ah, fear  
 me not'

Replied Melissa, 'no—I would not tell,  
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
 hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon'  
 'Be it so' the other, 'that we still may  
 lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'

Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar nor should you  
 (Tho', Madam, you should answer, we  
 would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more' He said  
 not what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go we have  
 been too long

Together keep your hoods about the  
 face,

They do so that affect abstraction here  
 Speak little, mix not with the rest, and  
 hold

Your promise all, I trust, may yet be  
 well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
 child,

And held her round the knees against his  
 waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and  
 the child

Push'd her flat hand agunst his face and  
 laugh'd,

And thus our conference closed

And then we stroll'd  
 For half the day thro' stately theatres  
 Bench'd crescent-wise In each we sat,  
 we heard

The grave Professor On the lecture  
 slate

The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration follow'd  
 then

A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five words  
 long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
 Time

Sparkle for ever then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame the  
 rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the  
flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and  
known;  
Till like three horses that have broken  
fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep in  
corn  
We issued gorged with knowledge, and  
I spoke—  
'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as  
we'  
'They hunt old trails' said Cyril 'very  
well;  
But when did woman ever yet invent?'  
'Ungacious!' answer'd Florian; 'have  
you learnt  
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that  
talk'd  
The trash that made me sick, and almost  
sick?'  
'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel in  
it  
Should I not call her wise, who made me  
wise?  
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a  
flash,  
Than if my brunpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby  
loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
hearts  
Whence follows many a vacant pang,  
but O  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche  
too,  
He cleft me thro' the stomacher, and  
now  
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow? will it  
hold?  
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness I  
Flatter myself that always everywhere  
I know the substance when I see it. Well,

Are castles shadows? Three of them?  
Is she  
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd  
coat?  
For dear are those three castles to my  
wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double  
worth,  
And much I might have said, but that  
my zone  
Unmann'd me then the Doctors' O to  
hear  
The Doctors' O to watch the thirsty  
plants  
Imbibing' once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane  
but thou,  
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my  
throat;  
Abuse those eyes that ever loved to meet  
Star-sisters answering under crescent  
brows,  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man,  
and loose  
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming out of  
time  
Will wonder why they came—but hark  
the bell  
For dinner, let us go!  
And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
By twos and threes, till all from end to  
end  
With beauties every shade of brown and  
fair  
In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of  
flowers  
How might a man not wander from his  
wits  
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept  
mine own  
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
The second-sight of some Astræan age  
Sat compass'd with professors they, the  
while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro  
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
terms

Of art and science Lady Blanche alone  
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
In act to spring

At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gardens  
there

One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down  
with that

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat some  
hid and sought

In the orange thickets others tost a ball  
Above the fountain jets, and back again  
With laughter others lay about the  
lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their  
May

Was passing what was learning unto  
them?

They wish'd to marry, they could rule a  
house,

Men hated learned women but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates, and often  
came

Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not then dry droopt, the  
chapel bells

Call'd us we left the walks, we mixt  
with those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to  
wall,

While the great organ almost burst his  
pipes,

Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the  
court

A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from  
Heaven

A blessing on her labours for the world

## III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me,  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast  
Father will come to thee soon,  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west

Under the silver moon  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep

Morn in the white wake of the morning  
star

Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with  
care

Descended to the court that lay three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
touch'd

Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
and watch'd

Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,  
approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
sleep,

Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
eyes

The circled Iris of a night of tears,  
'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet  
joy may!

My mother knows' and when I ask'd  
her 'how,'

'My fault' she wept 'my fault' and yet  
not mine,

Yet mine in part O hear me, pardon  
me

My mother, 'tis her wont from night to  
night

To rail at Lady Psyche and her side  
She says the Princess should have been

the Head,  
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms,

And so it was agreed when first they came ;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used,  
 Hers more than half the students, all the love  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you  
*Her countrywomen* she did not envy her  
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?  
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these words the stroke,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast,  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lone eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd  
 "O marvellously modest maiden, you '  
 Men ' girls, like men ' why, if they had been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric  
 Thus  
 For wholesale comment " Person, I am shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful "men"  
 (for still  
 My mother went revolving on the word)  
 "And so they are,—very like men indeed—  
 And with that woman closeted for hours"  
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
 "Why—these—are—men " I shudder'd  
 "and you know it "  
 "O ask me nothing," I said "And she knows too,  
 And she conceals it " So my mother clutch'd  
 The truth at once, but with no word from me,  
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
 The Princess Lady Psyche will be crush'd ;  
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly  
 But heal me with your pardon ere you go '

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'  
 Sud Cyril 'Pale one, blush again than wear  
 Those hues, better blush our lives away  
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven '  
 He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak  
 In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-medes,  
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."  
 But I will melt this marble into wax  
 To yield us farther furlough ' and he went.  
 Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
 He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,'  
 Florian ask'd,  
 'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left '  
 'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two  
 Division smoulders hidden, 'tis my mother,  
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
 Pent in a crevice much I bear with her  
 I never knew my father, but she says  
 (God help her) she was wedded to a fool,  
 And still she rail'd against the state of things  
 She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
 And from the Queen's decease she brought her up  
 But when your sister came she won the heart  
 Of Ida they were still together, grew  
 (For so they said themselves) insculcated,  
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note,  
 One mind in all things yet my mother still  
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
 And angled with them for her pupil's love  
 She calls her plagiarist, I know not what  
 But I must go I dare not tarry,' and light,  
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled  
 Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,  
 'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.

If I could love, why thus were she how  
 pretty  
 Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
 again,  
 As if to close with Cyril's random wish  
 Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
 erring pride,  
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in  
 tow '

'The crane,' I said, 'my chatter of  
 the crane,  
 The dove my murmur of the dove, but I  
 An eagle cling in eagle to the sphere  
 My princess, O my princess ' true she errs,  
 But in her own grand way being herself  
 Three times more noble than three score  
 of men,  
 She sees herself in every woman else,  
 And so she wears her error like a crown  
 To blind the truth and me for her, and  
 her,  
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
 The nectar, but—ah she—whence'er she  
 moves  
 The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
 A Memnon smitten with the morning  
 Sun '

So saying from the court we paced,  
 and gain'd  
 The terrace ranged along the Northern  
 front,  
 And leaning there on those balusters, high  
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank  
 the gale  
 That blown about the foliage underneath,  
 And sated with the innumerable rose,  
 Beat balm upon our eyelids Hither came  
 Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he  
 cried,  
 'No fighting shadows here' I forced a  
 way  
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and  
 thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice  
 down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
 woman

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found  
 her there  
 At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming  
 storm  
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well  
 oil'd,  
 As man's could be, yet maiden meek I  
 pry'd  
 Concealment she demanded who we  
 were,  
 And why we came? I fabled nothing fur,  
 But, your example pilot, told her all  
 Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and  
 eye  
 But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate.  
 And our three lives True—we had  
 limed ourselves  
 With open eyes, and we must take the  
 chance  
 But such extremes, I told her, well might  
 harm  
 The woman's cause. "Not more than  
 now," she said,  
 "So puzzled as it is with favouritism"  
 I tried the mother's heart Shame might  
 befall  
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew  
 Her answer was "Leave me to deal with  
 that"  
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences  
 I grew discouraged, Sir, but since I knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission a thousand years,  
 I recommenced, "Decide not ere you  
 pause  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third—the authentic found-  
 ress you  
 I offer boldly we will set you highest  
 Wink at our advent help my prince to  
 gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise  
 you  
 Some palace in our land, where you shall  
 reign

The head and heart of all our fair she-  
world,  
And your great name flow on with broad-  
ening time  
For ever." Well, she balanced this a  
little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute thus much, nor more  
I gain'd '

He ceasing, came a message from the  
Head  
'That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North  
Would we go with her? we should find  
the land  
Worth seeing, and the river made a fall  
Out yonder ' then she pointed on to  
where  
A double hull ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the  
vale

Agreed to, thus, the day fled on thro'  
all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour  
Then summon'd to the porch we went.  
She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
one  
Of those tame leopards Kittenlike he  
roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal I drew  
near,  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure  
came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our house  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty  
masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not Yet  
I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and  
with awe,  
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Broke, as she smote me with the light of  
eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills

I rode beside her and to me she said  
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us  
not  
Too harsh to your companion yesternorn,  
Unwillingly we spake ' 'No—not to her,'  
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say '  
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-  
dresses  
From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,  
A license. speak, and let the topic die '

I stammer'd that I knew him—could  
have wish'd—  
'Our king expects—was there no pre-  
contract?  
There is no truer hearted—ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd  
To follow surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to  
death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair '

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read  
—no books?  
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals  
in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
with them  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to  
do it,  
Being other—since we learnt our meaning  
here,  
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man '

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile  
 'And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
 At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,  
 O Vāshti, noble Vāshti! Summon'd out  
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms'

'Alas your Highness breathes full  
 East,' I said,  
 'On that which leans to you I know the Prince,  
 I prize his truth and then how vast a work  
 To assail this gray preeminence of man!  
 You grant me license might I use it?  
 think,  
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail,  
 Then comes the feeble heiress of your plan,  
 And takes and ruins all, and thus your pains  
 May only make that footprint upon sand  
 Which old recurring waves of prejudice  
 Resmooth to nothing might I dread  
 that you,  
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts  
 her due,  
 Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,  
 'Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!  
 What! tho' your Prince's love were like  
 a God's,  
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
 You are bold indeed we are not talk'd  
 to thus  
 Yet will we say for children, would they  
 grew  
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like  
 them well  
 But children die, and let me tell you, girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot  
 die,  
 They with the sun and moon renew their  
 light  
 I or ever, blessing those that look on  
 them  
 Children—that men may pluck them from  
 our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
 O—children—there is no lump upon earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err nor would we work  
 for fame,  
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause  
 of Great,  
 Who learns the one not sto whence after  
 hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
 but little wherefore up and act, nor  
 shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we  
 had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of grubs living, each, a thousand years,  
 That we might eat our own work out,  
 and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
 If that strange Post-princess with her  
 grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won  
 And she broke out interpreting my  
 thoughts.

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster  
 to you,  
 We are used to that for women, up till  
 this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South sea isle  
 taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, full so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot  
 guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion to  
 us  
 If we could give them surer, quicker  
 proof—  
 Oh if our end were less achievable

By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phrase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the  
    piles,  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear,  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black  
    blocks  
A breadth of thunder O'er it shook the  
    woods,  
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck  
    out  
The bones of some vast bulk that lived  
    and roar'd  
Before man was She gazed awhile and  
    said,  
'As these rude bones to us, are we to  
    her  
That will be' 'Dare we dream of that,'  
    I ask'd,  
'Which wrought us, as the workman and  
    his work,  
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried,  
    'you love  
The metaphysics' read and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch beneath an emerald  
    plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock, our device, wrought to the  
    life,  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her  
For there are schools for all' 'And yet'  
    I said  
'Methinks I have not found among them  
    all  
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of  
    that,'  
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not in  
    truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids  
    should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the  
    living hound,  
And cram him with the fragments of the  
    grave,  
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm.

Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful  
    jest,  
Encarnalize their spirits yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter  
    hangs  
How bent ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us,  
    learnt,  
For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing Were you sick,  
    ourself  
Would tend upon you To your question  
    now,  
Which touches on the workman and his  
    work  
Let there be light and there was light  
    'tis so  
For was, and is, and will be, are but is,  
And all creation is one act at once,  
The birth of light but we that are not all,  
As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
    now that,  
And live, perforce, from thought to  
    thought, and make  
One act a phantom of succession thus  
Our weakness somehow shapes the  
    shadow, Time  
But in the shadow will we work, and  
    mould  
The woman to the fuller day'  
    She spake  
With kindled eyes we rode a league  
    beyond,  
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,  
    came  
On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty 'O how sweet' I said  
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
'To linger here with one that loved us'  
    'Yea,'  
She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy, for indeed these fields  
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and  
    saw  
The soft white vapour streak the crowned  
    towers  
Built to the Sun' then, turning to her  
    maids,  
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;



Lay out the viands ' At the word, they  
 raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph, here she  
 stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman conqueror, woman conquer'd  
 there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
 hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side but  
 we  
 Set forth to climb, then, climbing, Cyril  
 kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the  
 rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
 In the dark crag and then we turn'd,  
 we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony  
 names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap  
 and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,  
 and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the  
 lawns

## IV

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying  
 O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying  
 Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying  
 O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying  
 And answer echoes answer, dying, dying, dying

'There sinks the nebulous star we call  
 the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound'  
 Said Ida, 'let us down and rest,' and  
 we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled preci-  
 pices,  
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm and  
 cleft,  
 Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where  
 below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the  
 tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner Once she lean'd  
 on me,  
 Descending, once or twice she lent her  
 hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.  
 But when we planted level feet, and  
 dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
 There leaning deep in broder'd down we  
 sank  
 Our elbows on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and  
 gold

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us -  
 lighther move  
 The minutes fledged with music ' and a  
 maid,  
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and  
 sang

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gaze her to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge,  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy frigid  
On lips that are for others, deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret,  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

She ended with such passion that the  
tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring  
pearl

Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there  
beunt

About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool

And so pace by but time are fancies  
hatch'd

In silken folded idleness, nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones  
be,

While down the streams that float us each  
and all

To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs  
of ice,

Throne after throne, and molten on the  
waste

Becomes a cloud for all things serve  
their time

Toward that great year of equal might  
and rights,

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the  
end

Found golden let the past be past, let  
be

Their cancell'd Babeis tho' the rough  
lex break

The star'd mosaic, and the beard-blown  
goat

Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree  
split

Their monstrous idols, care not while we  
hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle,  
burns

Above the unrisen morrow.' then to me,  
'Know you no song of your own land,' she  
said,

'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
But deals with the other distance and the  
hues  
Of promise, not a death's-head at the  
wine'

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,  
What time I watch'd the swallow wing-  
ing south

From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part

Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and  
light

Upon her lat ice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love.  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with  
alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant, for still  
my voice  
Rang false but smiling 'Not for thee,'  
she said,

'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
 Shall burst her veil marsh divers, rather,  
     mud,  
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
     crake  
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass and  
     this  
 A mere love poem! O for such, my friend,  
 We hold them slight they mind us of  
     the time  
 When we made bricks in Egypt Knives  
     are men,  
 That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
 And dress the victim to the offering up  
 And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
 And play the slave to grin the tyranny  
 Poor soul! I had a mud of honour once,  
 She wept her true eyes blind for such a  
     one,  
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades  
 I loved her Peace be with her She  
     is dead  
 So they blaspheme the muse! But great  
     is song  
 Used to great ends ourself have often  
     tried  
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have  
     dash'd  
 The passion of the prophetess, for song  
 Is drier unto freedom, force and growth  
 Of spirit than to junketing and love  
 Love is it? Would this same mock love,  
     and this  
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter  
     bats,  
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and  
     sphered  
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none  
     Enough!  
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth of  
     your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your country-  
     women?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous  
     head with eyes  
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.

Then while I dragg'd my brains for such  
     a song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell mouth'd glass  
     had wrought,  
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 Unmeet for ladies Florian nodded at  
     him,  
 I frowning, Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
     and shook;  
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows,  
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried, 'Forbear,  
     Sir!'  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
     and love,  
 I smote him on the breast, he started  
     up,  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd,  
 Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the death,' 'To  
     horse'  
 Said Ida, 'home I to horse I' and fled,  
     as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dovecote  
     doors,  
 Disorderly the women Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
 In the pavilion there like parting hopes  
 I heard them passing from me hoof by  
     hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge, and then another  
     shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O  
     the Head!'  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,  
     and roll'd  
 In the river Out I sprang from glow to  
     gloom  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a  
     blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall a glance I gave,  
 No more, but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged, and the flood drew - yet I  
     caught her, then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half the  
     world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree

Was half-disrooted from his place and  
stoop'd  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling  
wave  
Mid-channel Right on this we drove  
and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd  
the shore

There stood her maidens glimmeringly  
group'd  
In the hollow bank One reaching  
forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms; they cried  
'she lives'  
They bore her back into the tent but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me  
wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends, but push'd alone  
on foot  
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian  
craft  
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at  
length  
The garden portals Two great statues,  
Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the  
gates

A little space was left between the  
horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with  
pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed from  
hue to hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now the  
star,  
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns

A step  
Of hightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain  
gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this  
were she,'  
But it was Florian 'Hist O Hist,' he  
said,  
'They seek us out so late is out of  
rules  
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry  
How came you here?' I told him 'I'  
said he,  
'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,  
return'd  
Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us last of  
all,  
Melissa trust me, Sir, I pitied her  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at  
first  
Was silent, closer prest, denied it not  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there, she  
call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors,  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to  
face,  
And I slept out but whither will you now?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are  
fled  
What, if together? that were not so well  
Would rather we had never come! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark'  
'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more  
than I  
That struck him. this is proper to the  
clown,  
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still  
the clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and to  
shame

That which he says he loves for Cyril,  
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he  
He has a solid base of temperament  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk  
near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
'Names'

He, standing still, was clutch'd, but I  
began

To thrind the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains fleet I was of foot  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes,  
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer, at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and  
known

They haled us to the Princess where  
she sat

High in the hall above her droop'd a  
lamp,

And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-  
head,

Prophet of storm a handmaid on each  
side

Bow'd toward her, combing out her long  
black hair

Damp from the river, and close behind  
her stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger  
than men,

Huge women blowzed with health, and  
wind, and rain,

And labour Each was like a Druid rock,  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
with mews

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing  
clove

An advent to the throne and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily shining child, and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from  
wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken with her  
sobs,

Melissa knelt, but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
days

You prized my counsel, lived upon my  
lips

I led you then to all the Castales,  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse,  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother those were gracious  
times

Then came your new friend you began  
to change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to  
cool,

Till taken with her seeming openness

You turn'd your warmer currents all to  
her,

To me you froze this was my meed for all  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something  
great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve, and thus a noble  
scheme

Grew up from seed we two long since had  
sown,

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun.  
We took this palace, but even from the  
first

You stood in your own light and darken'd  
     mine  
 What student came but that you plained  
     her path  
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine  
     were lean,  
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known  
 Then came these wolves - *they* knew her  
     *they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yesternorn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she to  
     hear.  
 And me none told not less to an eye like  
     mine  
 A heedless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my  
     foot  
 Was to you - but I thought again I fear'd  
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall  
     hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche " you had gone to  
     her,  
 She told, perforce, and winninger's grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
     among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown, the  
     stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my  
     honest heat  
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
 To push my rival out of place and power.  
 But public use required she should be  
     known,  
 And since my oath was ta'en for public  
     use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them  
     well,  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief  
     done,  
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate  
     me for it)  
 I came to tell you, found that you had  
     gone,  
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise now, I  
     thought,  
 That surely she will speak, if not, then I.

Did she? These monsters blazon'd what  
     they were,  
 According to the coarseness of their kind,  
 For thus I hear, and known at last (my  
     work)  
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she  
     flies,  
 And I remain on whom to wreak your  
     rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
 I that have wasted here health, wealth,  
     and time,  
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not  
     boast  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
 For every gust of chance, and men will say  
 We did not know the real light, but chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can  
     tread'

She ceased the Princess answer'd  
     coldly, 'Good  
 Your oath is broken we dismiss you go  
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the  
     child)  
 Our mind is changed we take it to our  
     self'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture  
     throat,  
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
     smile  
 'The plan was mine I built the nest'  
     she said  
 'To latch the cuckoo Rise!' and stoop'd  
     to updrag  
 Melissa she, half on her mother propt,  
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face,  
     and cast  
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
 A Niobe daughter, one arm out,  
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven, and  
     while  
 We gazed upon her came a little stir  
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued.  
 A woman post in flying raiment Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,  
and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the  
Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrath-  
ful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the  
rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens,

For anger most it seem'd, while now her  
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her  
heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle at once the lost lamb at her teet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam,  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire, she  
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should  
say

'Read,' and I read—two letters—one her  
sire's

'Fair daughter, when we sent the  
Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws, which  
learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are  
built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slept round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his son'

The second was my father's running  
thus

'You have our son touch not a hair of  
his head.

Render him up unscathed give him your  
hand

Cleave to your contract tho' indeed we  
hear

You hold the woman is the better man;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against their  
Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well  
deserve

That we this night should pluck your  
palace down,

And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read,  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct, not a scorner of your sex  
But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be hear me, for I bear,  
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoever your  
wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a  
life

Less mine than yours my nurse would  
tell me of you,

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness, when a boy, you stoop'd  
to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
south

And blown to inmost north, at eve and  
dawn

With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods,  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would cling it, and lapt in wreaths of  
glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had  
you been

Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the en-  
throned

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full  
tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait

On you, their centre let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman,  
     town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
 The dwarfs of presage tho' when known,  
     there grew  
 Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing, but in you  
     I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled  
     down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty  
     makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to  
     hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music, who desire you  
     more  
 Than growing boys their manhood, dy-  
     ing lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life, O more than poor  
     men wealth,  
 Than sick men health—yours, yours, not  
     mine—but half  
 Without you, with you, whole, and of  
     those halves  
 You worthiest, and howe'er you block  
     and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I  
     hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,  
     and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with  
     foam  
 And so she would have spoken, but there  
     rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together from the illumined hall

Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a  
     press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded  
     ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-  
     like eyes,  
 And gold and golden heads, they to and  
     fro  
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,  
     some pale,  
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the  
     land,  
 And some that men were in the very  
     walls,  
 And some they cared not, till a clamour  
     grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
 And worse-confounded high above them  
     stood  
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head but  
     rising up  
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair,  
     so  
 To the open window moved, remaining  
     there  
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the  
     light  
 Dash themselves dead She stretch'd  
     her arms and call'd  
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I  
     your Head?  
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks  
     I dare  
 All these male thunderbolts what is it  
     ye fear?  
 Peace! there are those to avenge us and  
     they come  
 If not,—myself were like enough, O girls  
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
 Die yet I blame you not so much for  
     fear,



Six thousand years of fear have made you  
 that  
 From which I would redeem you but  
 for those  
 That stir this hubbub—you and you—I  
 know  
 Your faces there in the crowd—to morrow  
 morn  
 We hold a great convention then shall  
 they  
 That love their voices more than duty,  
 learn  
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame  
 to live  
 No wiser than their mothers, household  
 stuff,  
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's  
 fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks  
 of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in  
 their heels,  
 But fit to strut, to dress, to dance, to  
 thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to  
 "scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad '

She, ending, waved her hands thereat  
 the crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved then with a smile,  
 that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure  
 gloom  
 Of thunder shower, she floated to us and  
 said

'You have done well and like a  
 gentleman,  
 And like a prince you have our thanks  
 for all  
 And you look well too in your woman's  
 dress  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman  
 You saved our life we owe you bitter  
 thanks  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in  
 the flood—

Then men had said—but now—What  
 hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you  
 both?—  
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good  
 hive,  
 You would-be quenchers of the light to  
 be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native  
 bears—  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour!  
 You that have dared to break our bound,  
 and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
 thwarted us—  
 I wed with thee! I bound by precontract  
 Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all  
 the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to  
 make your crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord  
 you Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful  
 to us  
 I trample on your offers and on you  
 Begone we will not look upon you more  
 Here, push them out at gates'

In wrath she spake  
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the  
 plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and  
 address'd  
 Their motion twice I sought to plead  
 my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
 hands,  
 The weight of destiny so from her face  
 They push'd us, down the steps, and  
 thro' the court,  
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at  
 gates

We cross'd the street and gun'd a petty  
 mound  
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and  
 heard  
 The voices murmuring While I listen'd,  
 came  
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
 doubt.

I seem'd to move among a world of  
ghosts,  
The Princess with her monstrous woman-  
guard,  
The jest and earnest working side by side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
Were shadows, and the long fantastic  
night  
With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy,  
Not long, I shook it off, for spite of  
doubts

And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but  
came

As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway  
sun

Set into sunrise, then we moved away

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,  
That beat to battle where he stands,  
Thy face across his fancy comes  
And gives the battle to his hands  
A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee,  
The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee

So Lila sang we thought her half-  
possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the  
words,  
And, after, feigning pique at what she  
call'd  
The rallery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
lime—  
Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music—clapt her hands and cried  
for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an  
end  
And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
'Sir Ralph has got your colours if I  
prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle, what  
for me?'

It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand  
She took it and she flung it 'Fight'  
she said,  
'And make us all we would be, great  
and good'  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the  
Prince

v

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
the mound,  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And 'Stand who goes?' 'Two from the  
palace' I

'The second two they wait,' he said,  
'pass on,  
His Highness wakes' and one, that  
clash'd in arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas  
led

Threading the soldier city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind I stood and seem'd  
to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
wakes

A hisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbour's ear, and  
then

A strangled titter, out of which there  
broke

On all sides, clamouring etiquette to  
death,  
Unmeasured mirth, while now the two  
old kings

Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
The fresh young captains flush'd their  
glittering teeth,

The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded  
Squire.

At length my Sure, his rough cheek  
 wet with tears,  
 Panted from weary sides 'King, you are  
 free!

We did but keep you surety for our son,  
 If thus be he,—or a draggled man,  
 thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the  
 sludge  
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
 with briers,  
 More crumpled than a poppy from the  
 sheath,  
 And all one rig, dispriced from head to  
 heel.

Then some one sent beneath his vaulted  
 palm  
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him,  
 'Look,  
 He has been among his shadows.' 'Sat in  
 take  
 The old women and their shadows! (thus  
 the King  
 Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with  
 men  
 Go Cynl told us all'

As boys that sink

From ferule and the trespass chiding eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
 From what was left of faded woman-  
 slough  
 To sheathing splendours and the golden  
 scale  
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the  
 Earth,  
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cynl  
 met us  
 A little shy at first, but by and by  
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and  
 given  
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
 whereon  
 Follow'd his tale Amazed he fled away  
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
 Had come on Psyche weeping 'then we  
 fell  
 Into your father's hand, and there she  
 lies,  
 But will not speak, nor stir'

He show'd a tent

A stone-shot off we enter'd in, and there  
 Among piled arms and rough accoutre-  
 ments,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture dripped from  
 head to foot,  
 And push'd by rude hands from its  
 pedestal,  
 All her fur length upon the ground she  
 lay  
 And at her head a follower of the camp,  
 A char'd and wrinkled piece of woman-  
 hood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he  
 whisper'd to her,  
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister lie not  
 thus  
 What have you done but right? you could  
 not slay  
 Me, nor your prince look up be com-  
 forted  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
 When fall'n in darker ways' And like  
 wise I  
 'Be comforted have I not lost her too,  
 In whose leirst act abides the nameless  
 charm  
 That none has else for me?' She heard,  
 she moved,  
 She moan'd, a folded voice, and up she  
 sat,  
 And rused the cloak from brows as pale  
 and smooth  
 As those that mourn half-shrouded over  
 death  
 In deathless marble 'Her,' she said,  
 'my friend—  
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause and  
 mine—  
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not  
 your faith?  
 O base and bad! what comfort? none  
 for me!'  
 To whom remorseful Cynl, 'Yet I pray  
 Take comfort live, dear lady, for your  
 child!'  
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried,

' Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my  
 child,  
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no  
 more !  
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back ,  
 And either she will die from want of care,  
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
 The child is hers—for every little fault,  
 The child is hers , and they will beat my  
 girl  
 Remembering her mother O my flower !  
 Or they will take her, they will make her  
 hard,  
 And she will pass me by in after-life  
 With some cold reverence worse than  
 were she dead  
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they  
 made,  
 The horror of the shame among them all  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
 And make a wild petition night and day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaja, my one child  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her  
 Ah ! what might that man not deserve of  
 me  
 Who gave me back my child ? ' ' Be  
 comforted,'  
 Said Cyril, 'you shall have it ' but again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,  
 and so  
 Like tender things that being caught feign  
 death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd  
 By this a murmur ran  
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the  
 scouts  
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kungs at parle. and 'Look  
 you ' cried  
 My father 'that our compact be fulfill'd  
 You have spoilt this child , she laughs at  
 you and man  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and  
 him

But red-faced war has rods of steel and  
 fire ,  
 She yields, or war '  
 Then Gama turn'd to me  
 ' We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy  
 time  
 With our strange girl and yet they say  
 that still  
 You love her Give us, then, your mind  
 at large  
 How say you, war or not ?'  
 ' Not war, if possible,  
 O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of  
 war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the  
 household flower  
 Torn from the lintel—all the common  
 wrong—  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster now she lightens  
 scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then  
 would hate  
 (And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify it)  
 The general foe More soluble is this  
 knot,  
 By gentleness than war I want her love  
 What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with catapults,  
 She would not love,—or brought her  
 chain'd, a slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not even would she love , but brooding  
 turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my fitting  
 chance  
 Were caught within the record of her  
 wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death and rather, Sure,  
 than this  
 I would the old God of war himself were  
 dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of  
 wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in  
 ice,  
 Not to be molten out '

And roughly spake  
 My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the  
     girls  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you,  
     Sir!  
 Man is the hunter, woman is his game  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the  
     chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their  
     skins,  
 They love us for it, and we ride them  
     down  
 Wheedling and siding with them! Out!  
     for shame!  
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to  
     them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,  
     comes  
 With the ~~ur~~ of the trumpet round him,  
     and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by the  
     score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd  
     with death  
 He reddens what he kisses thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
 Worth winning, but this firebrand—  
     gentleness  
 To such as her ' if Cynl spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it '  
     'Yea but Sire,' I cried,  
 'Wild natures need wise curbs The  
     soldier? No  
 What dares not Ida do that she should  
     prize  
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes,  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
     down  
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the  
     death,  
 No, not the soldier's yet I hold her, king,  
 True woman but you clash them all in  
     one,  
 That have as many differences as we  
 The violet varies from the lily as far

As oak from elm one loves the soldier,  
     one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one  
     that,  
 And some unworthily, their sinless faith,  
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
 Glorifying clown and slyr, whence they  
     need  
 More breadth of culture is not Ida right?  
 They worth it? truer to the law within?  
 Severer in the logic of a life?  
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
 Of earth and heaven? and she of whom  
     you speak,  
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods  
 Of sovereign artists, not a thought, a  
     touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak the  
     white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves, I say,  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual  
     mire,  
 But whole and one and take them all  
     in all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
     theirs  
 As dues of Nature To our point not  
     near  
 Lest I lose all '  
     'Nay, nay, you spake but sense  
 Said Grima 'We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth, we did not rate him  
     then  
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows  
 You talk almost like Ida *she* can talk,  
 And there is something in it as you say  
 But you talk kinder we esteem you for  
     it—  
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter for the rest,  
 Our own detention, why, the causes  
     weigh'd,  
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
 We pardon it, and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,

You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's  
     head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
     milking-maid,  
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of  
     cream  
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our  
     lines,  
 And speak with Arac Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida something may be  
     done—  
 I know not what—and ours shall see us  
     friends  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you  
     will,  
 Follow us who knows? we four may  
     build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition '                      Here he reach'd  
 White hands of farewell to my sire, who  
     growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his  
     beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go

Then rode we with the old king across  
     the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of  
     Spring  
 In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and  
     woke  
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised help,  
     and oozed  
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode  
 And blossom-fragrant shpt the heavy  
     dews  
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each  
     light air  
 On our mail'd heads but other thoughts  
     than Peace  
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled  
     squares,  
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling  
     the flowers  
 With clamour for among them rose a cry  
 As if to greet the king, they made a halt,

The horses yell'd, they clash'd their arms;  
     the drum  
 Beat, merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial  
     fife,  
 And in the blast and bray of the long  
     horn  
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
 The banner anon to meet us lightly  
     pranced  
 Three captains out, nor ever had I seen  
 Such thews of men the midmost and the  
     highest  
 Was Arac all about his motion clung  
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made  
     them glance  
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's  
     zone,  
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;  
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
 Their motions, wash'd with morning, as  
     they came

And I that prated peace, when first I  
     heard  
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
     force,  
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
 Stir in me as to strike then took the king  
 His three broad sons, with now a wonder  
     ing hand  
 And now a pointed finger, told them all  
 A common light of smiles at our disguise  
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy  
     jest  
 Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
 The genial grunt, Arac, roll'd himself  
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
     words

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath' and he  
     himself  
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war  
 And, 'sdeath' myself, what care I, war  
     or no?  
 But then this question of your troth re-  
     mains -  
 And there's a downright honest meaning  
     in her

She flies too high, she flies too high ' and  
yet

She ask'd but spice and fairplay for her  
scheme,

She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things? but, life  
and soul!

I thought her half-right talking of her  
wrongs,

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath' what of  
that?

I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those  
she loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not this is  
all,

I stand upon her side she made me  
swear it—

'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by candle  
light—

Swear by St something—I forget her  
name—

Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men,  
*She* was a princess too, and so I swore  
Come, this is all, she will not waive  
your claim

If not, the foughten field, what else, it  
once

Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's  
will'

I lagged in answer loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
yet,

Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering it the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat 'Like to like!  
The woman's garment hid the woman's  
heart'

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a  
blow!

For fiery short was Cynl's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the  
point

Where idle boys are cowards to their  
shame,

'Decide it here why not? we are three  
to three'

Then spake the third 'But three to  
three? no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause;  
More, more, for honour every captive  
waits

Hungry for honour, angry for his king  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick' by over-  
throw

Of these or those, the question settled die'

'Yet,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wrath  
of war,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if ye  
will

It needs must be for honour if it all  
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail she would not  
leap

Her compact' 'Sdeath' but we will  
send to her,'

Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word'

'Boys' shriek'd the old king, but  
warmer than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool, for  
none

Regarded, neither seem'd there more to  
say

Back rode we to my father's camp, and  
found

He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Idyl would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life three times  
he went

The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd

He batter'd at the doors, none came  
the next,

An awful voice within had warn'd him  
thence

The third, and those eight daughters of  
the plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught  
his hair,

And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild not less one glance  
he caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the  
noise

Of arms, and standing like a stately Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right  
and left

Suck'd from the dark heart of the long  
hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale and yet  
her will

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the kung that I was  
pledged

To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
clash'd

His iron palms together with a cry,  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state,  
perforce

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur

And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And swore to combat for my claim till  
death

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall and likewise  
here,

Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with  
Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd  
up,

And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and  
came,

Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling  
words

Oration-like I kiss'd it and I read

'O brother, you have known the pangs  
we felt,

What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's  
feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor  
bride

Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a  
scourge,

Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots, and  
of those,—

Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood,  
and swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men the old leaven  
leaven'd all

Millions of throats would bawl for civil  
rights,

No woman named therefore I set my  
face

Against all men, and lived but for mine  
own

Far off from men I built a fold for them  
I stored it full of rich memorial

I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey  
And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
our peace,

Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know  
not what

Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for  
their sport!

I tamed my leopards shall I not tame  
these?

Or you? or I? for since you think me  
touch'd

In honour—what, I would not aught of  
false—

Is not our cause pure? and whereas I  
know

Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's  
blood

You draw from, fight, you failing, I abide



What end soever fail you will not Still  
Take not his life he risk'd it for my own,  
His mother lives yet whatsoe'er you do,  
Fight and fight well, strike and strike  
home. O dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,  
you

The sole men to be mingled with our  
cause,

The sole men we shall prize in the after-  
time,

Your very armour hallow'd, and your  
statues

Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad fly brush'd  
aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
And mould a generation strong to move

With clam on clam from right to right,  
till she

Whose name is yoked with children's,  
know herself,

And Knowledge in our own land make  
her free,

And, ever following those two crowned  
twins,

Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery  
gram

Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern

morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
the rest

'See that there be no traitors in your  
camp

We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague

of men!

Almost our maids were better at their  
homes,

Than thus man girdled here indeed I  
think

Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother, which she left

She shall not have it back the child  
shall grow

To prize the authentic mother of her mind  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed

This morning there the tender orphan  
hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
from thence

The wrath I nursed against the world  
farewell'

I ceased, he said, 'Stubborn, but she  
may sit

Upon a king's right hand in thunder  
storms,

And breed up warriors' See now, tho'  
yourself

Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spind

ling king,

This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance  
When the man wants weight, the woman

takes it up,  
And topples down the scales, but this is

fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of all,  
Man for the field and woman for the

hearth

Man for the sword and for the needle she  
Man with the head and woman with the

heart

Man to command and woman to obey,  
All else confusion Look you! the gray

mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From title to scullery, and her small good

man

Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires  
of Hell

Mix with his hearth but you—she's yet  
a colt—

Take, break her strongly groom'd and  
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the banthing scald at home, and

brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in  
the street

They say she's comely, there's the faire.  
chance

I like her none the less for rating at her!  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom'

Thus the hard old king  
 I took my leave, for it was nearly noon  
 I pored upon her letter which I held,  
 And on the little clause 'take not his life'  
 I mused on that wild morning in the  
 woods,  
 And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
 win'  
 I thought on all the wrathful king had  
 said,  
 And how the strange betrothment was to  
 end  
 Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's  
 curse  
 That one should fight with shadows and  
 should fill,  
 And like a flash the weird affection came  
 King, camp and college turn'd to hollow  
 shows,  
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream  
 And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
 The lists were ready Empanoplied and  
 plumed  
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
 The trumpet, and again at which the  
 storm  
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of  
 spears  
 And riders front to front, until they closed  
 In conflict with the crash of snivering  
 points,  
 And thunder Yet, it seem'd a dream, I  
 dream'd  
 Of fighting On his haunches rose the  
 steed,  
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire  
 Part sat like rocks part reel'd but kept  
 their seats  
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again  
 and drew  
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
 horses Down  
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and  
 down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
 The large blows rain'd, as here and every-  
 where  
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
 lists,  
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and  
 shaft, and shield—  
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil  
 bang'd  
 With hammers, till I thought, can this  
 be he  
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,  
 The mother makes us most—and in my  
 dream  
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
 eyes,  
 And highest, among the statues, statue-  
 like,  
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
 A single band of gold about her hair,  
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven but  
 she  
 No saint—inevitable—no tenderness—  
 Too hard, too cruel yet she sees me  
 fight,  
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave  
 Among the thickest and bore down a  
 Prince,  
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my  
 dream  
 All that I would But that large-moulded  
 man,  
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering  
 back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and  
 horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the  
 drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign till  
 it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
 cracks, and splits,  
 And twists the grain with such a roar  
 that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry, for every-  
 thing

Gave way before him only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right  
 eye,  
 Thrust in between, but Arac rode him  
 down  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
 Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet,  
 tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at  
 arms,  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
 smote  
 And threw him last I spur'd, I felt  
 my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat, a moment hand  
 to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse  
 we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted, the blade  
 glanced,  
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and  
 truth  
 Flow'd from me, darkness closed me,  
 and I fell

✓ VI

Home they brought her warrior dead  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 'She must weep or she will die

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe,  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face,  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee—  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee'

My dream had never died or lived  
 again

As in some mystic middle state I lay,  
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard  
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
 So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
 That all things grew more tragic and  
 more strange,  
 That when our side was vanquish'd and  
 my cause  
 For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
 The Prince is slain My father heard  
 and ran  
 In on the lists, and there unlaced my  
 casque  
 And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
 Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
 With Psyche's babe in arm there on the  
 roofs  
 Like that great dame of Lapidoth she  
 sang

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n the seed,  
 The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
 Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
 Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
 A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n they  
 came,  
 The leaves were wet with women's tears they  
 heard  
 A noise of songs they would not understand  
 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
 And would have strown it, and are fall'n them  
 selves

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n they  
 came,  
 The woodmen with their axes to the tree!  
 But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
 And boats and bridges for the use of men

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n they  
 struck  
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor  
 knew  
 There dwelt an iron nature in the grain  
 The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
 Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
 A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power and roll'd  
 With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
 The tops shall stride from star to star, the fangs  
 Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our  
sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof,  
whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a  
day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dimes and heroines of the golden  
year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
Spring,  
To run an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three but  
come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are  
won  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse  
mankind,  
Ill nurses, but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that  
there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in  
her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves,  
and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on  
they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest by  
them went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their  
curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering  
fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade but  
Blanche  
At distance follow'd so they came anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously, and as the leader of the  
herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on

To where her wounded brethren lay;  
there stay'd,  
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—  
and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear de-  
liverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said 'You shall not lie in the tents  
but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought,  
and served  
With female hands and hospitality'

Then, whether moved by this, or was  
it chance,  
She past my way Up started from my  
side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless  
eye,  
Silent, but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd, and when  
she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend  
beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead  
past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she  
said  
'He saved my life my brother slew him  
for it'  
No more at which the king in bitter  
scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the  
tress,  
And held them up she saw them, and a  
day  
Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good Queen, her mother, shore  
the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche  
And then once more she look'd at my pale  
face  
Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind,  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;

She bow'd, she set the child on the earth,  
she laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and  
presently

'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives he is not  
dead

O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace we will tend on him  
Like one of these, if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that  
make

Our progress falter to the woman's goal'

She said but at the happy word 'he  
lives'

My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
wounds

So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening  
mixt

Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever  
stole

A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
brede,

Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
dance

Its body, and reach its fating innocent  
arms

And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out 'Mine—  
mine—not yours,

It is not yours, but mine give me the  
child'

Ceased all on tremble piteous was the  
cry

So stood the unhappy mother open  
mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way wan was  
her cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle  
torn,

Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and  
half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe, but she nor  
cared

Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
stood

Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child, but he that  
lay

Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee then he  
drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she  
look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it  
seem'd,

Or self-involved, but when she learnt his  
face,

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er  
him grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he  
said

'O fair and strong and terrible'  
Lioness

That with your long locks play the Lion's  
mane!

But Love and Nature, these are two more  
terrible

And stronger See, your foot is on our  
necks,

We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your  
will

What would you more? give her the  
child! reman

Orb'd in your isolation he is dead,

Or all is dead henceforth we let you be  
Win you the hearts of women, and  
beware

Lest, where you seek the common love  
of these,

The common hate with the revolving  
wheel

Should drag you down, and some great  
Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
with fire,

And tread you out for ever but how  
so'er

Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her

Give her the child ' O if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you  
     loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled  
     you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to  
     prayer,  
 Give her the child ' or if you scorn to  
     try it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with  
     yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one  
     fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not  
     kill,  
 Give *me* it ' I will give it her ' He said

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening, after sank and  
     sank

And, into mournful twilight mellowing,  
     dwelt

Full on the child, she took it ' Pretty  
     bud '

Lily of the vale ' half open'd bell of the  
     woods !

Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a  
     world

Of traitorous friend and broken system  
     made

No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell,  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part and yet how fun  
     was I

To dream thy cause embraced in mine,  
     to think

I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
     breast

In the dead prime but may thy mother  
     prove

As true to thee as false, false, false to me !  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke,  
     I wish it

Gentle as freedom '—here she kiss'd it  
     then—

' All good go with thee ! take it Sir,'  
     and so

Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands

Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she  
     sprang

To meet it, with an eye that swum in  
     thanks,

Then felt it sound and whole from head  
     to foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
     enough,

And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled  
     it,

And hid her bosom with it, after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly

' We two were friends I go to mine  
     own land

For ever find some other as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans yet  
     speak to me,

Say one soft word and let me part for  
     given '

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child  
 Then Arac ' Ida—'sdeath ! you blame  
     the man,

You wrong yourselves—the woman is so  
     hard

Upon the woman Come, a grace to me !  
 I am your warrior I and mine have fought  
 Your battle kiss her, take her hand,  
     she weeps

'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er  
     than see it '

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,  
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
     said

' I've heard that there is iron in the  
     blood,

And I believe it Not one word? not one?  
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not  
     from me,

Not from your mother, now a saint with  
     saints

She said you had a heart—I heard her  
     say it—

" Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she died—

" But see that some one with authority  
 Be near her still " and I—I sought for  
     one—

All people said she had authority—  
 The Lady Blanche much profit! Not  
     one word,  
 No! tho' your father sues see how you  
     stand  
 Stuff as Lot's wife, and all the good  
     knights maim'd,  
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
 For your wild whim and was it then  
     for this,  
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
 Where we withdrew from summer herds  
     and state,  
 And had our wine and chess beneath the  
     planes,  
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's  
     gone,  
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
 Speak to her I say is this not she of  
     whom,  
 When first she came, all flush'd you said  
     to me  
 Now had you got a friend of your own  
     age,  
 Now could you share your thought, now  
     should men see  
 Two women faster welded in one love  
 Than pairs of wedlock, she you walk'd  
     with, she  
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up  
     in the tower,  
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what,  
     and now  
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
 Not one to spare her out upon you,  
     flint!  
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any, nor,  
 You shame your mother's judgment too  
     Not one?  
 You will not? well—no heart have you,  
     or such  
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness  
 So said the small king moved beyond his  
     wont.  
 But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her  
     force  
 By many a varying influence and so long

Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor  
     wept  
 Her head a little bent, and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
     moon  
 In a still water then brake out my sire,  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds.  
     'O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even  
     now,  
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wish'd it—but we  
     see  
 The accomplice of your madness unfor-  
     given,  
 And think that you might mix his draught  
     with death,  
 When your skies change again the  
     rougher hand  
 Is safer on to the tents take up the  
     Prince'  
 He rose, and while each ear was prick'd  
     to attend  
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
     her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more,  
     and shone  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend  
     'Come hither  
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me,  
     come,  
 Quick while I melt, make reconciliation  
     sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an  
     hour  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being  
     chid'  
 I seem no more I want forgiveness too.  
 I should have had to do with none but  
     maids,  
 That have no links with men Ah false  
     but dear,  
 Dear trutor, too much loved, why?—  
     why?—Yet see,  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet  
     once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse to wait upon  
 him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to  
 him,  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
 know it;  
 Taunt me no more yourself and yours  
 shall live  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our minds  
 Till happier times each to her proper  
 hearth.  
 What use to keep them here—now?  
 grant my prayer  
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the  
 king  
 Thru this male nature to some touch of  
 that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags  
 me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are'  
 Passionate tears  
 Follow'd the king replied not Cyril  
 said  
 'Your brother, Lady,—Florran,—ask for  
 him  
 Of your great head—for he is wounded  
 too—  
 That you may tend upon him with the  
 prince'  
 'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 'Our laws are broken let him enter  
 too'  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful  
 song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him 'Ay so,' she said,  
 'I stagger in the stream I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling  
 hour  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it  
 be'  
 'Ay so?' said Blanche 'Amazed am I  
 to hear  
 Your Highness but your Highness  
 breaks with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make—  
 twas I

T

I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
 And block'd them out; but these men  
 came to woo  
 Your Highness—verily I think to win.'  
 So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye.  
 But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
 tower,  
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn  
 'Fling our doors wide' all, all, not  
 one, but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or  
 foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will Let our girls flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood by  
 us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from his  
 base  
 Had left us rock She fain would sting  
 us too,  
 But shall not Pass, and mingle with  
 your likes.  
 We brook no further insult but are gone'  
 She turn'd, the very nape of her white  
 neck  
 Was rosed with indignation but the  
 Prince  
 Her brother came, the king her father  
 charm'd  
 Her wounded soul with words nor did  
 mine own  
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand  
 Then us they lifted up, dead weights,  
 and bare  
 Strught to the doors to them the doors  
 gave way  
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
 The virgin marble under iron heels  
 And on they moved and grun'd the hall,  
 and there  
 Rested but great the crush was, and  
 each base,  
 To left and right, of those tall columns  
 drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers. at the further end

F



Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
Close by her like supporters on a shield,  
Bow back'd with fear but in the centre  
stood

The common men with rolling eyes,  
amazed

They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent,  
stare

When armour clash'd or jingled, a hile  
the day,

Descending, struck athwart the hall, and  
shot

A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head to  
head,

Now fired in angry Pallis on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then in echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room,  
and died

Of fright in far apartments

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance  
And me they bore up the broad stairs,  
and thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due

To languid limbs and sickness, left me  
in it,

And others elsewhere they laid, and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times, but some were left of  
those

Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the  
walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything was  
changed

# VII

Ask me no more the moon may draw the sea,  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the  
shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape,  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?

Ask me no more

Ask me no more what answer should I give  
I have no hollow cheek or faded eye  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die  
Ask me no more, lest I should not then live,  
Ask me no more

Ask me no more thy fate and mine are sealed  
I trove again the stream and all its ways  
Let the great river take me to the sea  
No more, dear love for a touch I yield,  
Ask me no more

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital,  
At first with all confusion by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws  
A kinder influence reign'd, and every  
where

I saw voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick the maidens came,  
they tri'd,

They sang, they read till she not far  
began

To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble, and to add to  
With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,

Late creatures native un'o gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with  
shame

Old studies fail'd, seldom she spoke  
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and grazed alone for  
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field void was her  
use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great  
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of  
night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge to  
shore,

And suck the blinding splendour from the  
sand,

And quenching lake by lake and turn by  
farn

sponge the blood so red she gazing  
 there,  
 a black'nd all her world in scars,  
 till  
 and was a world and vain, till down  
 she came,  
 and found for peace once more among  
 the

And twilight even'd and morn by  
 mora the dark  
 shot up and shudd' in fading gyres,  
 but I  
 lay suert in the muffled cage of life  
 And twilight gloom'd, and morrow grown  
 the  
 Drew the great light into themselves,  
 and Heaven,  
 star after star, more and fell - but I,  
 Deeper than those word com's could  
 reach me, lay  
 Quenched under the moving Universe,  
 Nor knew where I was on me, nor the  
 hand  
 That nursed me, more than infants in  
 their sleep

But Psyche tended Floran with her  
 oft  
 Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but  
 left  
 Her child among us, willing she should  
 keep  
 Court-favour here and there the small  
 bright head,  
 A light of healing, glanced about the  
 couch,  
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
 With blush and smile, a medicine in  
 themselves  
 To wile the length from languorous hours,  
 and draw  
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange  
 that soon  
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
 Join'd at her side nor stranger seem'd  
 that hearts  
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close in  
 love,

Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
 shal e  
 To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper  
 down.  
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one

Less prosperously the second suit ob-  
 tain'd  
 At first with Psyche Not tho' Blanche  
 had sworn  
 That after that dark night among the fields  
 She needs must wed him for her own good  
 nature  
 Not tho' he built upon the babe restored  
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but  
 fear'd  
 To incense the Heav' once more, till on  
 a day  
 When Cyll pleaded, Ida came behind  
 Seen but of Psyche on her foot she hung  
 A moment, and she heard, at which her  
 face  
 A little flush'd, and she put on, but each  
 Assumed from thence a half-consent in-  
 volved  
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at  
 peace.

Nor only these Love in the sacred halls  
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
 With showers of random sweet on maid  
 and man  
 Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
 Nor did mine own, nor reconciled, nor yet  
 Did those twin brothers, risen again and  
 whole,  
 Nor Aric, satiate with his victory

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat  
 Then came a change, for sometimes I  
 would catch  
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
 And sling it like a viper off, and shriek  
 'You are not Ida,' clasp it once again,  
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
 And call her hard and cold which seem'd  
 a truth  
 And still she fear'd that I should lose my  
 mind,

And often she believed that I should die  
 Till out of long frustration of her care,  
 And pensive tendance in the all weary  
     noons,  
 And watches in the dead, the durl, when  
     clocks  
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors,  
     or call'd  
 On flying Time from all their silver  
     tongues—  
 And out of memories of her kinder days,  
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
     dream,  
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
 And wordless broodings on the wasted  
     cheek—  
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to  
     these,  
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with  
     tears  
 By some cold morning glacier, fruil at first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd colour day by day

Last I woke sane, but well nigh close  
     to death  
 For weakness it was evening silent light  
 Slept on the punted walls, wherein were  
     wrought  
 Two grand designs, for on one side arose  
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
 At the Opprian law Titanic shapes, they  
     cramm'd  
 The forum, and half crush'd among the  
     rest  
 A dwarf like Cato cower'd On the other  
     side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax, behind,  
 A train of dames by axe and eagle sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman  
     scowls,  
 And half the wolf's milk curdled in their  
     veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs, and before them  
     paused  
 Hortensia pleading angry was her face

I saw the forms I knew not where I  
     was  
 They did but look like hollow shows,  
     nor more  
 Sweet Ida prim to prim she sat the dew  
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
 And rounder seem'd I moved I sigh'd  
     a touch  
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my  
     hand  
 Then all for languor and self pity ran  
 Mine down my face, and with what life I  
     had,  
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
 So drench'd it is with ten part, to the sun,  
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
 Fixt my fuint eyes, and utter'd whisper  
     ingly

'If you be, what I think you, some  
     sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
 I ask you nothing - only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect I shall die  
     to night  
 Stoop down and seem to lass me ere I  
     die'

I could no more, but lay like one in  
     trance,  
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
     friends,  
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make  
     one sign,  
 But lies and dreads his doom She turn'd,  
     she paused,  
 She stoop'd, and out of languor leapt a  
     cry,  
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of  
     death;  
 And I believed that in the living world  
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips,  
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she  
     rose  
 Glowing all over noble shame, and all  
 Her falsar self slept from her like a robe,  
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
 Than in her mould that other, when she  
     came

From barren deeps to conquer all with  
love;  
And down the streaming crystal dropt,  
and she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
her out  
For worship without end, nor end of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee ' but mute she glided  
forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and  
slept,  
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy  
sleep

Deep in the night I woke she, near  
me, held  
A volume of the Poets of her land  
There to herself, all in low tones, she  
read

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk,  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font  
The fire fly wakens - waken thou with me

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me

Now lies the Earth all Danaic to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me'

I heard her turn the page, she found  
a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she  
read

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain  
height  
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire,  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down

And find him, by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine, nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors  
But follow, let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley, let the wild  
Lorn headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That life a broken purpose waste in air  
So waste not thou, but come, for all the vales  
Await thee, azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees'

So she low-toned, while with shut  
eyes I lay  
Listening, then look'd Pale was the  
perfect face,  
The bosom with long sighs labour'd, and  
meek  
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lumi-  
nous eyes,  
And the voice trembled and the hand  
She said  
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
In sweet humility, had fail'd in all,  
That all her labour was but as a block  
Left in the quarry, but she still were loth,  
She still were loth to yield herself to one  
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal  
rights  
Against the sons of men, and barbarous  
laws  
She pray'd me not to judge their cause  
from her  
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth  
than power  
In knowledge something wild within  
her breast,  
A greater than all knowledge, beat her  
down  
And she had nursed me there from week  
to week

Much had she learnt in little time In  
part

It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts yet was she but a girl—  
'Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of  
farce'

When comes another such? never, I think,  
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs'

Her voice  
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her  
hands,

And her great heart thro' all the faultful  
Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I cried not  
break,

Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was hapt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for help  
She moved, and at her feet the volur e  
fell

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said,  
'nor blame

Too much the sons of men and barbarous  
laws,

These were the rough ways of the world  
till now

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that  
know

The woman's cause is man's they rise  
or sink

Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or  
free

For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with  
man

His nights, his days, moves with him to  
one goal,

Stays all the fair young planet in her  
hands—

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more  
alone!

Our place is much as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding  
her—

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her  
down—

Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood  
For woman is not undevelop'd man,  
But diverse could we make her as the  
man,

Sweet love were strain'd his dearest bond  
is this,

Not like to like but like in difference  
Yet in the long years like must they grow.  
The man born of woman, she of man,  
He gain in wisdom and in moral height,  
Nor lose the very thing that was that they  
the world,

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward  
care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,

Like perfect man to noble words,  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
Time,

Sit side by side, full arm'd in all their  
power,

Dispensing law, owing the To be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,

Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other even as those who love

Then comes the state of Eden back to  
men

Then reign the world's great bride, the  
chaste and calm

Then springs the crowning race of human  
kind

May these things be?"

Sighing she spoke 'I fear  
They will not'

'Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch  
word rest

Of equal, seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies

Nor equal, nor unequal each fulfil  
Defect in each, and always thought in  
thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow  
The single pure and perfect animal,

The two cell'd heart beating, with one  
full stroke,

Life'

And again sighing she spoke 'A  
dream  
That once was mine! what woman taught  
you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I  
know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the  
world,  
I loved the woman - he, that doth not,  
lives

A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than  
death,  
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with  
crime.

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved  
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household  
ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and  
yet

On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds  
perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as they  
moved,

And girdled her with music Happy he  
With such a mother! faith in woman-  
kind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
things high

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and  
fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay'  
'But I,'

Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with  
words

This mother is your model I have  
heard

Of your strange doubts they well might  
be I seem

A mockery to my own self Never,  
Prince,

You cannot love me.'

'Nay but thee' I said  
'From yearlong poring on thy pictured  
eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
and saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence  
up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood  
now,

Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
thee,

Indeed I love the new day comes, the  
light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over lift thine eyes, my doubts  
are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows the  
change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it  
Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
mine,

Like yonder morning on the blind half-  
world,

Approach and fear not, breathe upon  
my brows,

In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and  
this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland  
reels

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds  
Forgive me,

I waste my heart in signs let be My  
bride,

My wife, my life O we will walk this  
world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across the  
wild

That no man knows Indeed I love  
thee come,

Yield thyself up my hopes and thine are  
one

Accomplish thou my manhood and thy  
self,

Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust  
to me'

## CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you  
all  
The random scheme as wildly as it rose  
The words are mostly mine, for when  
we ceased  
There came a minute's pause, and Walter  
said,  
'I wish she had not yielded ' then to me,  
'What, if you drest it up poetically '  
So pray'd the men, the women I gave  
assent  
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of  
seven  
Together in one sheaf? What style could  
suit?  
The men required that I should give  
throughout  
The sort of mock heroic gigantesque,  
With which we bunter'd little Lilia first  
The women—and perhaps they felt their  
power,  
For something in the ballads which they  
sang,  
Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
close—  
They hated banter, wish'd for something  
real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
Not make her true heroic—true sublime?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce  
could be  
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them  
both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor  
them.  
But Lilia pleased me, for she took no  
part  
In our dispute the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her, and she sat, she  
pluck'd the grass,

She flung it from her, thinking last, she  
fixt  
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
'You—tell us what we are' who might  
have told,  
For she was cramm'd with theories out  
of books,  
But that there rose a shout the gates  
were closed  
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming  
now,  
To take their leave, about the garden  
rails  
So I and some went out to these we  
climb'd  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turningsaw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far shadowing from the west, a land of  
peace,  
Gray halls alone among their massive  
groves,  
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic  
tower  
Half lost in belts of hop and breadths of  
wheat,  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream,  
the seas,  
A red sul, or a white, and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of  
France  
'Look there, a garden ' said my  
college friend,  
The Tory member's elder son, 'and  
there'  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
her off,  
And keeps our Britain, whole within  
herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves  
have made,  
Some patient force to change them when  
we will,  
Some civic manhood firm against the  
crowd—  
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden  
heat,

The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not  
fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the  
world

In mock heroics stranger than our own,  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
No graver than a schoolboys' burning  
out,

Too comic for the solemn things they  
are

Too solemn for the comic touches in  
them,

Like our wild Princess with as wise a  
dream

As some of theirs—God bless the narrow  
seas!

I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad!

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves  
are full

Of social wrong; and maybe wildest  
dreams

Are but the needful preludes of the truth  
For me, the general dry, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a  
faith,

This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart Patience! Give it  
time

To learn its limbs there is a hand that  
guides!

In such discourse we gain'd the garden  
rails,

And there we saw Sir Walter where he  
stood,

Before a tower of crimson holly hocks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and  
look'd

No little hily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-  
man,

A lord of fat prize oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none,

And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
them up

Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of  
Heavens

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
Ralph

From those rich silks, and home well  
pleased we went

Fair-hur'd and redder than a windy  
morn,

Now shaking hands with him, now him,  
of those

That stood the nearest—now address'd  
to speech—

Who spoke few words and pithy, such as  
closed

Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the  
year

To follow a shout rose again, and made  
the long line of the approaching rookery  
swerve

From the elms and shook the branches  
of the deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
and rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset, O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roul that hails  
Premier or king! Why should not these  
great Sirs

Give up their parks some dozen times a  
year

To let the people breathe? So thrice  
they cried,

I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
away

But we went back to the Abbey, and  
sat on,

So much the gathering darkness charm'd  
we sat

But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man the  
walls

Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and  
owls whoop'd,

And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
them up

Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
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ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE  
DUKE OF WELLINGTON

PUBLISHED IN 1852

## BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall

## II

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central roar  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore

## III

Lead out the pageant sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow,  
The last great Englishman is low

## IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the  
Past

No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, reso-  
lute,

Whole in himself, a common good  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,

And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime  
O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore  
The long self sacrifice of life is o'er  
The great World-victor's victor will be  
seen no more

## V

All is over and done  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son  
Let the bell be toll'd  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river,  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold  
Let the bell be toll'd  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold  
Let the bell be toll'd  
And a deeper knell in the heart be  
knoll'd,

And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross,  
And the volleying cannon thunder his  
loss,

He knew their voices of old  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom  
When he with those deep voices wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from shame,  
With those deep voices our dead captain  
taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame  
In praise and in dispraise the same,

A man of well-attemper'd fame  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-echoing avenues of song

## VI

'Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd  
guest,  
With banner and with music, with soldier  
and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking on  
my rest?  
Mighty Sermon, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous  
man,

The greatest savior since our world began  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
For this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea,  
His foes were thine, he kept us free.  
O give him welcome, this is he  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee,  
For this is England's greatest son  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
Nor ever lost an English gun,  
This is he that far away  
Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won,  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth and  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms,  
Back to France with countless blows  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.

Such a war had such a close.  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings,  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler  
down,  
A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
away,  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew,  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant cry,  
And down we swept and charged and  
overthrew

So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long enduring hearts could do  
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
Mighty Sermon, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
thine!

And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him,  
Eternal honour to his name

## VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
Powers,  
Thank Him who led us here, and roughly  
set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming  
showers,

We have a voice, with which to pay the  
 debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and re-  
 gret  
 To those great men who fought, and kept  
 it ours  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
 control,  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
 the soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England  
 whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
 sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
 springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings,  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march of  
 mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns  
 be just  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust  
 Remember him who led your hosts,  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
 wall,  
 His voice is silent in your council hall  
 For ever, and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent, even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent, yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who  
 spoke,  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the  
 hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power,  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high and  
 low,  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life,  
 Who never spoke against a foe,  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
 rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the  
 right  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
 named,

Truth-lover was our English Duke,  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed

## VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state  
 Not once or twice in our rough island  
 story,

The path of duty was the way to glory  
 He that walks it, only thirsting  
 For the right, and learns to deaden  
 Love of self, before his journey closes,  
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
 Into glossy purples, which outredden  
 All voluptuous garden-roses  
 Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory  
 He, that ever following her commands,  
 On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
 won

His path upward, and prevail'd,  
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
 scaled

Are close upon the shining table lands  
 To which our God Himself is moon and  
 sun

Such was he his work is done  
 But while the races of mankind endure,  
 Let his great example stand  
 Colossal, seen of every land,  
 And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
 pure

Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
 The path of duty be the way to glory  
 And let the land whose hearths he saved  
 from shame

For many and many an age proclaim  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 And when the long-illumined cities  
 flame,

Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,

With honour, honour, honour. honour to  
him,  
Eternal honour to his name

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmouled tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one who whose patriarchal knee  
Lies the little children clung  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung  
Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity  
Whom we see not we revere ;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and run,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane .  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be  
For tho' the Grant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will ,  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll

Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul ?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust  
Hush, the Dead March wails in the  
people's ears -  
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs  
and tears  
The black earth yawns the mortal  
disappears ,  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ,

He is gone who seem'd so great —  
Gone , but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him  
God accept him, Christ receive him

1852

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak you told  
us all  
That England's honest censure went  
too far ,  
That our free press should cease to brawl,  
Not stung the fiery Frenchman into  
war  
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
To fling whatever we felt, not fearing, into  
words

We love not this French God, the child  
of Hell,  
Wild War, who breaks the converse of  
the wise ,  
But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction  
lies  
It might be safe our censures to withdraw ,  
And yet, my Lords, not well there is a  
higher law

As long as we remain, we must speak free,  
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
break ,  
No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe we *must*  
speak ;  
That if to night our greatness were struck  
dead,  
There might be left some record of the  
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er  
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for evermore  
What I have we fought for Freedom from  
our prime,  
At last to dodge and palter with a public  
crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never  
fear'd

From our first Charles by force we  
wring our claims  
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second  
James

I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove  
them on the seas

And you, my Lords, you may e the people  
muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would hush in honey'd whispers of this  
monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,  
Not ours the fault if we have feeble  
hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin  
Have left the last free rice with naked  
coasts!

They knew the precious things they had  
to guard

For us, we will not spare the tyrant one  
hard word

Tho' miggard throats of Manchester may  
bawl,

What England was, shall her true sons  
forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her honour  
yet

And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,  
And hold against the world this honour  
of the land

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred  
'Forward, the Light Brigade!'  
Charge for the guns!' he said  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred

III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd,  
Storm'd it with shot and shell  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke,  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

I  
Cannon to right of them  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd.  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred

II  
When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

# ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

I.  
UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
In this wide hall with earth's intention  
stored,  
And pruse the invisible universal Lord,  
Who lets once more in peace the nations  
meet,  
Where Science, Art, and Labour have  
outpour'd  
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet

II  
O silent father of our Kings to be  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks to  
thee!

III  
The world-compelling plan was thine,—  
And, lo! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace, lo! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design,  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom and wheel and enginery,

Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,  
Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,  
And shapes and hues of Art divine!  
All of beauty, all of use,  
That one fair planet can produce,  
Brought from under every star,  
Blown from over every main,  
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
The works of peace with works of war

IV  
Is the goal so far away?  
Far, how far no tongue can say,  
Let us dream our dream to-day

V  
O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
reign,  
From growing commerce loose her latest  
chain  
And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker  
fly  
To happy havens under all the sky,  
And mix the seasons and the golden  
hours,  
Till each man find his own in all men's  
good,  
And all men work in noble brotherhood  
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
towers,  
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
And gathering all the fruits of earth and  
crown'd with all her flowers

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
Alexandra!  
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of  
thee,  
Alexandra!  
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!  
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and  
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet !

Break, happy land, into earlier flowers !

Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
bowers !

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
prayer !

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours !

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !

Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers !

Flames, on the windy headland flare !

Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground swell dash'd on the  
strand,

Roll as the sea when he welcomes the  
land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's  
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the  
throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your  
own

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,

Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome of  
thee,  
Alexandrovna !

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL  
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEX-  
ANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF  
EDINBURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove  
for power—

Whose will is lord thro' all his world  
domain—

Who made the serf a man, and bent  
his chain—

Has given our Prince his own imperial  
I lower,

Alexandrovna

And welcome Russian flower, a people's  
pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin to  
blossom

From love to love, from home to home  
you go,

From no her unto mother, stately bride,  
Marie Alexandrovna !

II

The golden reign along the steppes is  
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents are  
stirred,

Ilbarz and all the Crucians have  
heard,

And all the sultry plains of India known,  
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea

On coasts of Africa as on cliffs of Kent,

The Moors and that Isle of Continent,

And loyal shores of Canada murmur  
thee,

Marie Alexandrovna

III.

Fair empires branching, both in lusty  
life !—

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman  
swords,

Yet thine own land has bow'd to  
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne a  
wife,

Alexandrovna !

For thrones and peoples are as waves that  
swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and  
flow,

But who love best have best the grace  
to know

That Love by right divine is deathless  
king,

Marie Alexandrovna !

## IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
land,

Where men are bold and strongly say  
their say,—

See, empire upon empire smiles to-  
day,

As thou with thy young lover hand in  
hand

Alexandrovna !

So now thy fuller life is in the west,

Whose hand at home was gracious to  
thy poor—

Thy name was blest within the narrow  
door,

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,

Marie Alexandrovna !

## V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-  
where,

The blue heaven break, and some  
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change the  
hearts of men,

Alexandrovna ?

But hearts that change not, love that  
cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of soul  
in soul !

And howsoever this wild world may roll,  
Between your peoples truth and manifold  
peace,

Alfred—Alexandrovna !

## THE GRANDMOTHER

## I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man  
And Willy's wife has written she never was over-wise,  
Never the wife for Willy he wouldn't take my advice

## II

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
I hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave  
Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was against it for one  
Eh !—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone

## III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock,  
Never a man could fling him for Willy stood like a rock  
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week !' says doctor, and he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round

## IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs but still of his tongue !  
I ought to have gone before him I wonder he went so young  
I cannot cry for him, Annie I have not long to stay,  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away

## V

Why do you look at me, Annie ? you think I am hard and cold,  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest,  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.



## VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear  
 I mean your grandfather, Annie it cost me a world of woe,  
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago

## VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
 That Jenny had tript in her time I knew, but I would not tell  
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar '  
 But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire

## VIII

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight

## IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;  
 And all things look'd half dead, tho' it was the middle of May  
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been '  
 But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean

## X

And I cried myself well nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
 I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate  
 The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
 And whut, whut, whut, in the bush beside me chirrup't the nightingale.

## XI

All of a sudden he stopt there past by the gate of the farm,  
 Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.  
 Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how,  
 Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now

## XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant,  
 Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsy and went  
 And I said, 'Let us part in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
 You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name '

## XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine  
 'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine  
 And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill,  
 But marry me out of hand we two shall be happy still '

## XIV

'Marry you, Willy' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind'  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No, love, no,'  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago

## XV

So Willy and I were wedded I wore a lilac gown,  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn

## XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife,  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life

## XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain  
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn  
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born

## XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay  
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way  
Never jealous—not he—we had many a happy year,  
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near

## XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died  
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side  
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget  
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet

## XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill

## XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team.  
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream  
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead

## XXII

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive;  
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty five -  
 And Willy, my eldest-born at nigh threescore and ten -  
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

## XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve,  
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve  
 And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I,  
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by

## XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad  
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had,  
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease,  
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace

## XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
 And happy has been my life, but I would not live it again  
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest,  
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best

## XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower,  
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—  
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;  
 I, too, shall go in a minute What time have I to be next?

## XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise  
 Get me my glasses, Annie thank God that I keep my eyes  
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have part away  
 But stay with the old woman now you cannot have long to stay

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## OLD STIFF

## I.

WHEER 'asta bean sra long and me: higg'in' ere aloan?  
 Noorse? thou't nowt o' a noorse whoy, Doctor's abean an' agoan  
 Says that I moant 'a naw moor aale but I beant a fool  
 Git ma my aale, fur I beant a gawin' to bre ik my rule

## II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a sɔys what's nawways true  
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saay the things that a do  
 I ve 'ed my point o' aale ivry noight sin' I bern 'ere  
 An' I've 'ed my quirt ivry market-noight for foorty year

## III

Parson's a bern loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed  
 'The amoughty's a trɔkin o' you<sup>1</sup> to 'issén, my friend,' a said,  
 An' a tow'd mɔ my sins, un's toithe were due, un' I gied it in hond,  
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a mɔ' bea I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn  
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne  
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voated wɔ Squire an' choorch an' staate,  
 An' a' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raate.

## V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur dead,  
 An' 'eard 'um a bummin' wɔaay loike a buzzard-clock<sup>2</sup> ower my 'ead,  
 An' I niver knɔw'd whot a mean'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saay,  
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaay

## VI

Bessy Marris's barne ' tha knaws she laaid it to mea  
 Mowt a bern, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, shea  
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand,  
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond

## VII

But Parson a cooms an' a gois, an' a says it easy an' freea  
 'The amoughty's a taakin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'ca  
 I weant saay men be loiers, thaw summun said it in 'aaste  
 But 'e reads wonn sarmin a wecak, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waaste

## VIII

D'ya moind the waaste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then,  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eard 'um mysen,  
 Moast loike a butter-bump,<sup>3</sup> fur I 'eard 'um about an' about,  
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wɔ the lot, an' raaved an' rembled 'um out.

## IX

Keeper's it wur, fo' they fun 'um theer a-laid of 'is faace  
 Down i' the wold 'enemies<sup>4</sup> afoor I coom'd to the plaace  
 Noaks or Thumbleby—toaner<sup>5</sup> 'ed shot 'um as dead as a naail  
 Noaks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aale

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour<sup>2</sup> Cockchafer<sup>3</sup> Bittern<sup>4</sup> Anemones<sup>5</sup> One or other

## X

Dubbut loook at the waaste    theer warn't not feead for a cow,  
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' loook at it now—  
 Warn't worth nowt a haacre, an' now theer's lots o' feead,  
 Fourscoor<sup>1</sup> yows upon it an' some on it down i' seead<sup>2</sup>

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I mean'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
 Done it ta-year I mean'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,  
 If godamoughty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloan,  
 Mea, wi' haate hoonderd haacre o' Squire's, an' lond o' my oan

## XII

Do godamoughty knaw what a's doing a-taakin' o' mea?  
 I beant wonn as saws 'ere a bean an' yonder a pea;  
 An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!  
 And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year

## XIII

A mowt 'a taaen owd Joanes, as 'ant not a 'aapoth o' sense,  
 Or a mowt 'a taaen young Robins—a niver mended a fence  
 But godamoughty a moost taake mea an' taake ma now  
 Wi' aaf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoalms to plow<sup>1</sup>

## XIV

Loook 'ow quoloty smolles when they seeas ma a passin' boy,  
 Says to thessen naw doubt 'what a man a bea sewer-loiy'  
 Fur they knaws what I bean to Squire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All,  
 I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy duty boy hall

## XV

Squire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
 For whoa's to howd the lond ater mea thot muddles ma quoit;  
 Sartn sewer I bea, thot a weant niver give it to Joanes,  
 Naw, nor a moant to Robins—a niver rembles the stoans

## XVI

But summun 'ull come ater mea mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steam  
 Huzzin' an' maazin' the blessed fealds wi' the Divil's oan team  
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to see it

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aale?  
 Doctor's a 'toattler, lass, an' a's hallus i' the owd taale,  
 I weant break rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;  
 Git ma my aale I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour

<sup>2</sup> Clover

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## NEW STYLE

## I.

Dosy't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, 'as they canters awaay?  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saay  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paains.  
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in 'all thy braains

## II.

Woa—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam yon's parson's 'ouse—  
 Doesn't thou knw that a man mun be either a man or a mouse?  
 Time to think on it then, for thou'll be twenty to weeak<sup>1</sup>  
 Proputty, proputty—woa then woa—let ma 'ear mysén speak

## III

Mc an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as bean a-talkin' o' thee;  
 Thou's bean talkin' to muther, an' she bean a tellin' it me  
 Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—  
 Noa—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boath on us thinks tha an ass

## IV

Seca'd her todaay goa by—Saaunt's daay—they was ringing the bells  
 She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soa is scoors o' gells,  
 Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blaws  
 But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws

## V

Do'ant be stunt<sup>2</sup> taake time I knaws what maakes tha sa mad.  
 Warn't I craazed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?  
 But I knaw'd a Quaaker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this  
 'Doant thou marry for munny, but goa wheer munny is'

## VI

An' I went wheer munny war an' thy muther coom to 'and,  
 Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land  
 Maaybe she warn't a beauty—I niver giv it a thowt—  
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass 'as 'ant nowt?

## VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weant 'a nowt when 'e's dead,  
 Mun be a guvness, l'rd, or summut, and addle<sup>3</sup> her bread  
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weant niver git hissen clear,  
 An' 'e maade the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere

<sup>1</sup> This week.<sup>2</sup> Obstinate<sup>3</sup> Earn

## VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,  
 Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet  
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noan to lend 'im a shuv,  
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>1</sup> yowe fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv

## IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
 Maakin' 'em goa togither as they've good right to do  
 Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaid by?  
 Naay—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it reason why

## X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
 Cooms of a gentleman burn an' we boath on us thinks tha an ass  
 Woa then, proputtly, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt<sup>2</sup>—  
 Woa then, wiltha? dangtha<sup>3</sup>—the bees is as fell as ow t<sup>3</sup>

## XI

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'ead, lad, out o' the fence!  
 Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shullins an' pence?  
 Proputtly, proputtly's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest  
 If it isn't the saame oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

## XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breaks into 'ouses an' sterls,  
 Them as 'as coats to their backs an' taakes their regular meals  
 Noa, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meal's to be 'id  
 Taake my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad

## XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a bean a laazy lot,  
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got  
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt, leastways 'is munny was 'id  
 But 'e tued an' moi'd 'issén dead, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did

## XIV

Looook thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!  
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill,  
 An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see,  
 And if thou marries a good un I'll leave the land to thee.

## XV

Thim's my noations, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick,  
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leave the land to Dick—  
 Coom oop, proputtly, proputtly—that's what I 'ears 'im saay—  
 Proputtly, proputtly, proputtly—canter an' canter awaay

<sup>1</sup> Or fow welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back

<sup>2</sup> Mal es nothing

<sup>3</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything

## THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine,  
In lands of palm, of orange blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue,  
Where, here and there, on sandy  
beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain cor-  
nice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim,  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast,  
But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green,  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean,  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread,  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours,  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain,  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma,  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles,  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the  
glory!  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires'

I climb'd the roofs at break of day,  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air

Remember how we came at last  
To Como, shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded, and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,



Like ballad burthen music, kept,  
 As on The Lariano crept  
 To that fair port below the castle  
 Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept,  
 Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
 A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
 One tall Agavé above the lake

What more? we took our last adieu,  
 And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
 I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you

It told of England then to me,  
 And now it tells of Italy  
 O love, we two shall go no longer  
 To lands of summer across the sea,

So dear a life your arms enfold  
 Whose crying is a cry for gold  
 Yet here to night in this dark city,  
 When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
 This nurseling of another sky  
 Still in the little book you lent me,  
 And where you tenderly laid it by

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
 The gloom that saddens Heaven and  
 Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer  
 And gray metropolis of the North

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
 Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
 Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
 My fancy fled to the South again

### TO THE REV F D MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
 Godfather, come and see your boy  
 Your presence will be sun in winter,  
 Making the little one leap for joy

For, being of that honest few,  
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
 Should eighty thousand college-councils  
 Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
 At you, so careful of the right,  
 Yet one lay-hearth would give you wel  
 come

(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight,

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
 I watch the twilight falling brown

All round a careless order'd garden  
 Close to the ridge of a noble down

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
 But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
 And only hear the magpie gossip  
 Garrulous under a roof of pine

For groves of pine on either hand,  
 To break the blast of winter, stand,  
 And further on, the hoary Channel  
 Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand,

Where, if below the milky steep  
 Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
 And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
 Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
 Which made a selfish war begin,  
 Dispute the claims, arrange the chances,  
 Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win

Or whether war's avenging rod  
 Shall rush all Europe into blood,  
 Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
 Dear to the man that is dear to God,

How best to help the slender store,  
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor,  
 How gain in life, as life advances,  
 Valour and charity more and more

Come, Maurice, come the lawn as yet  
 Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet,  
 But when the wreath of March has  
 blossom'd,  
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
 For those are few we hold as dear;  
 Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
 Many and many a happy year

January, 1854

## WILL

## I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong  
 For him nor moves the loud world's  
     random mock,  
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
 Who seems a promontory of rock,  
 That, compass'd round with turbulent  
     sound,  
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
 Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended  
     Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
 Or seeming general venial fault,  
 Recurring and suggesting still !  
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
 And o'er a weary sultry land,  
 Far beneath a blazing vault,  
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hull,  
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt

IN THE VALLEY OF  
CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest  
     white,  
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening  
     of the night,  
 All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
 I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty  
     years ago  
 All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,  
 The two and thirty years were a mist that  
     rolls away,  
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,  
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice  
     of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
     cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living voice  
     to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT  
SWAINSTON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,  
 Within was weeping for thee  
 Shadows of three dead men  
 Walk'd in the walks with me,  
 Shadows of three dead men and thou  
     wast one of the three

Nightingales sang in his woods  
 The Master was far away  
 Nightingales warbled and sang  
 Of a passion that lasts but a day ;  
 Still in the house in his coffin the Prince  
     of courtesy lay

Two dead men have I known  
 In courtesy like to thee  
 Two dead men have I loved  
 With a love that ever will be  
 Three dead men have I loved and thou  
     art last of the three

## THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour  
 I cast to earth a seed  
 Up there came a flower,  
 The people said, a weed

To and fro they went  
 Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
 Cursed me and my flower

Then it grew so tall  
 It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall  
 Stole the seed by night

Sow'd it far and wide  
 By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried,  
 ' Splendid is the flower '

Read my little fable  
 He that runs may read  
 Most can raise the flowers now,  
 For all have got the seed

And some are pretty enough,  
And some are poor indeed,  
And now again the people  
Call it but a weed

### REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly  
glides  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!  
Her quiet dream of life this hour may  
cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
To some more perfect peace

### THE SAILOR BOY

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
Shot o'er the seething harbour bar,  
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,  
And whistled to the morning star

And while he whistled long and loud  
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,  
'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
I see the place where thou wilt lie

'The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay,  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall ply

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame,"  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all to  
blame

'God help me' save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me'

### THE ISLET

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or so?'  
The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she was  
wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go?  
And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,  
But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory beak'd,  
With a scarlet sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd,  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,

I urny-delicate palaces shure  
Mixt with myrtle and clau with vine,  
And over-ream'd and silvery streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither O thither, love, let us go'

'No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,

And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear'

'Mock me no! mock me not! love, let  
us go'

'No, love, no  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on  
the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the  
blood,

And makes it a sorrow to be'

## CHILD-SONGS

I

## THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden whither would you wander?

Whither from this pretty home the home where mother dwells?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the gardens, anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury-bells'

Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander?

Whither from this pretty house, this city-house of ours?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover and the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-flowers'

II.

## MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie

Slept in a shell

Sleep, little ladies!

And they slept well

Pink was the shell within,

Silver without,

Sounds of the great sea

Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!

Wake not soon!

Echo on echo

Dies to the moon

Two bright stars

Peep'd into the shell

'What are they dreaming of?

Who can tell?'

Started a green linnet

Out of the croft,

Wake, little ladies,

The sun is aloft!

## THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,

And with it a spiteful letter

My name in song has done him much wrong,

For himself has done much better

O little bird, is your lot so hard,

If men neglect your pages?

I think not much of yours or of mine,

I hear the roll of the ages

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the times!

Are mine for the moment stronger?

Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,

I last but a moment longer

This faded leaf, our names are as brief,

What room is left for a hater?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,

For it hangs one moment later

Greater than I—is that your cry?

And men will live to see it

Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;

And if it be so, so be it

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,

But this is the time of hollies

O hollies and ivies and evergreens,

How I hate the spite and the follies!

## LITERARY SQUABBLES

Alas! the petty fools of rhyme

That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars

Before the stony face of Time,

And look'd at by the silent stars

Who hate each other for a song,

And do their little best to bite

And pinch their brethren in the throng,

And scratch the very dead for spite

And strun to make an inch of room

For their sweet selves, and cannot hear

The sullen Lethe rolling doom

On them and theirs and all things here

When one small touch of Charity  
 Could lift them nearer God like state  
 Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
 Like those who cried Diana greet

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
 I talk of Surely, after all,  
 The noblest answer unto such  
 Is perfect stillness when they brawl

## THE VICTIM

### I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
 A famine after laid them low,  
 Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
 For on them brake the sudden foe,  
 So thick they died the people cried,  
 'The Gods are moved against the land'  
 The Priest in horror about his altar  
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand  
 'Help us from famine  
 And plague and strife!  
 What would you have of us?  
 Human life?  
 Were it our nearest,  
 Were it our dearest,  
 (Answer, O answer)  
 We give you his life'

### II

But still the 'oeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood,  
 And dead men lay all over the way,  
 Or down in a furrow scathed with flame  
 And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,  
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
 came  
 'The King is happy  
 In child and wife,  
 Take you his dearest,  
 Give us a life'

### III

The Priest went out by heath and hill,  
 The King was hunting in the wild,  
 They found the mother sitting still,  
 She cast her arms about the child

The child was only eight summers old,  
 His beauty still with his years increased,  
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.  
 The Priest beheld him,  
 And cried with joy,  
 'The Gods have answer'd -  
 We give them the boy'

### IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
 He bore but little game in hand,  
 The mother said, 'They have taken the  
 child  
 To spill his blood and herd the land  
 The land is sick, the people diseased,  
 And blight and famine on all the lea  
 The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
 So I pray you tell the truth to me  
 They have taken our son,  
 . They will have his life  
 Is he your dearest?  
 Or I, the wife?'

### V

The King bent low, with hand on brow,  
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee  
 'O wife, what use to answer now?  
 For now the Priest has judged for me.'  
 The King was shaken with holy fear,  
 'The Gods,' he said, 'would have  
 chosen well,  
 Yet both are near and both are dear,  
 And which the dearest I cannot tell!  
 But the Priest was happy,  
 His victim won.  
 'We have his dearest,  
 His only son!'

### VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
 The knife uprising toward the blow  
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
 'Me, not my darling, no!'  
 He caught her away with a sudden cry,  
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
 And shrieking 'I am his dearest, I—  
 I am his dearest!' rush'd on the  
 knife.

And the Priest was happy,  
'O, Father Odin,  
We give you a life

Which was his nearest?  
Who was his dearest?  
The Gods have answer'd;  
We give them the wife "

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,  
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—  
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—  
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she  
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be

The wages of sin is death if the wages of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?  
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky.  
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die

## ✓ THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

{ Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?  
{ Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

{ Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
{ Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

{ Dark is the world to thee thyself art the reason why,  
{ For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee, and thou fulfillest thy doom  
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise, O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice

Law is God, say some no God at all, says the fool,  
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool,

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see.  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

## I

THE voice and the Peak  
Far over summit and lawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green rushing from the rosy thrones of  
dawn !

## II

All night have I heard the voice  
Rave over the rocky bar,  
But thou wert silent in heaven,  
Above thee glided the star

## III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all ?  
' I am the voice of the Peak,  
I roar and rave for I fall

## IV

' A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West,  
They leave the heights and are troubled,  
And moan and sink to their rest

## V

The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom,  
But they—they feel the desire of the deep—  
Fall, and follow their doom

## VI

' The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the deep,  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep '

## VII

Not raised for ever and ever,  
But when their cycle is o'er,  
The valley, the voice, the peak, the star  
Pass, and are found no more

## VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd  
At his highest with sunrise fire,  
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,  
And the thought of a man is higher

## IX

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height !  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight

## X

The voice and the Peak  
Far into heaven withdrawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn !

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in  
all,  
I should know what God and man is

## A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time  
himself  
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever  
more  
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
Shoots to the fall—take this and pray  
that he  
Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith  
in him,  
May trust himself, and after praise and  
scorn,  
As one who feels the immeasurable  
world,  
Attain the wise indifference of the wise,  
And after Autumn past—if left to pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless days—  
Draw toward the long frost and longest  
night,  
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
fruit  
Which in our winter woodland looks a  
flower<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle tree (*Euonymus  
Europæus*)

## EXPERIMENTS.

## BOADICEA.

While about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Fit in the East Boadicea, standing loftily exalted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Camulodane.  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populace,  
 Did they hear me, would they I seen, did they pay me supplicating?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?  
 Hear Icenian, Catuschannan, hear Contannan, Trinobant!  
 Must the ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
 Tear it a robe from the breast of Britain? leave it goiv' quivering?  
 Bark in answer, Britain's riven! bark and blacken innumerable,  
 Blacken round the Roman cannon, make the carcass a skeleton,  
 Kite and eagle wolf and wolfkin from the wilderness wallow in it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd Taranis re-propitiated  
 Lo their colony half-destroyed! lo their colony, Camulodune!  
 There the hoar of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary  
 There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idol.  
 Such is Rome, and thus let dery hear it, Spirit of Cassivelaun!

'Hear ye, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Contannan!  
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catuschannan Trinobant.  
 These have told us all their anger in ridiculous utterances,  
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard remotely  
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,  
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies  
 Bloody flow on the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;  
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the refert estuary;  
 Lessly smolder yesterday, suddenly gradually tottering—  
 There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.  
 Lo their precious Roman handing, lo the colony Camulodune.  
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be useful?  
 Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catuschannan hear Contannan, Trinobant!  
 While I rove'd about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,  
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,  
 Loosely roled in flying rimmer, sang the terrible prophetesses,  
 "Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!  
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!  
 Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,



Thine the myriad rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,  
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many blossoming Paradises,  
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the bittler thunder of God,"  
 So they chanted how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?  
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now

'Hear Icenian, Catuechlanian, hear Contanin, Trinobant!  
 Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me the lover of liberty,  
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!  
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!  
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated  
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cūmulodūne!  
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,  
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow ringleted Britones—  
 Bloodily, bloodily fall the bittler axe, unexhausted, inexorable  
 Shout Icenian, Catuechlanian, shout Contanin, Trinobant,  
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously  
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd  
 Lo the colony, there they roted in the city of Cūnobeline!  
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,  
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy  
 There they dwelt and there they roted, there—there—they dwell no more.  
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,  
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,  
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,  
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,  
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us'

So the Queen Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,  
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility  
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,  
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,  
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,  
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory  
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries  
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avrice,  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,  
 Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted away  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cūmulodūne.

# IN QUANTITY

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

### *Hexameters and Pentameters*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer !  
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England ?  
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon ?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters

### MILTON

#### *Alcaics*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonics,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 ✓ God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages,  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazy murmuring,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even

#### *Hendecasyllabics*

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
 So fantastical is the dainty metre  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me

Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—

As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly

### SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector spake, the Trojans roar'd  
 applause,  
 Then loosed their sweating horses from  
 the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his  
 own,  
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted  
 wine  
 And bread from out the houses brought,  
 and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from off  
 the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven  
 And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of  
 war  
 Sat glorying, many a fire before them  
 blazed

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge

As when in heaven the stars about the  
moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds are  
laid,  
And every height comes out, and jutting  
peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all the  
stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his  
heart

So many a fire between the ships and  
stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of  
Troy,  
A thousand on the plain, and close by  
each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
And eating hoary grain and pulse the  
steeds,  
Fired by their cars, waited the golden  
dawn *Iliad* VIII 542 561

## THE WINDOW, OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

Four years ago Mr Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I dressed up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

*December, 1870.*

### THE WINDOW

A TENNYSON

#### ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly!  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye!  
Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window pane,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows that  
cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,  
You are all running on, and I stand on  
the slope of the hill,  
And the winds are up in the morning!

Follow, follow the chase!  
And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on  
O lights, are you flying over her sweet  
little face?

And my heart is there before you are  
come, and gone,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning!

Follow them down the slope!  
And I follow them down to the window  
pane of my dear,  
And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,  
And it darkens and brightens and darkens  
like my fear,  
And the winds are up in the  
morning

#### AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss, and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
 Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
 Rose, rose and climatis,  
 Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
 Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
 All of flowers, a flower, a flower  
 Dropt, a flower

## GONE.

Gone!  
 Gone, till the end of the year,  
 Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
 left me in shadow here!  
 Gone—flitted away,  
 Taken the stars from the night and the  
 sun from the day!  
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
 storm in the air!  
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
 know not where!  
 Down in the south is a flash and a groan:  
 she is there! she is there!

## WINTER

The frost is here,  
 And fuel is dear,  
 And woods are scar,  
 And fires burn clear,  
 And frost is here  
 And has bitten the heel of the going year

Bite, frost, bite!  
 You roll up away from the light  
 The blue wood-louse, and the plump  
 dormouse,  
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies are  
 I ill'd,  
 And you bite far into the heart of the  
 house,  
 But not into mine

Bite, frost, bite!  
 The woods are all the scarier,  
 The fuel is all the dearer,  
 The fires are all the clearer,  
 My spring is all the nearer,  
 You have bitten into the heart of the  
 earth,  
 But not into mine

## SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 And you with gold for hair!  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and for ever

Men's love and birds' love,  
 And women's love and men's!  
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
 You my queen of the wrens!  
 You the queen of the wrens—  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
 And all in a nest together

## THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
 Fine little hands, fine little feet—  
 Dewy blue eye.  
 Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
 Ask her to marry me by and by?  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
 Fly,  
 Fly to the light in the valley below—  
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

## NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and the  
 run!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
 And never a glimpse of her window pane!  
 And I may die but the grass will grow,  
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
 And the wet west wind and the world  
 will go on  
 Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,

Ay is life for a hundred years,  
 No will push me down to the worm,  
 And when I am there and dead and gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world will  
 go on

The wind and the wet, the wind and the  
 wet !

Wet west wind how you blow, you  
 blow !

And never a line from my lady yet !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?

Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world may  
 go on

#### NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
 Take my love, for love will come,  
 Love will come but once a life  
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !  
 Spring is here with leaf and grass

Take my love and be my wife  
 After-likes of maids and men  
 Are but dainties drest again  
 Love me now, you'll love me then  
 Love can love but once a life

#### THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,  
 Clasp on her seal, my sweet !  
 Must I take you and break you,  
 Two little hands that meet ?  
 I must take you, and break you,  
 And loving hands must part—  
 Take, take—break, break—  
 Break—you may break my heart  
 Faint heart never won—  
 Break, break, and all's done.

#### AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
 Be merry on earth as you never were  
 merry before,  
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,  
 And merry for ever and ever, and one  
 day more

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme

Look, look, how he flits,  
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
 from out of the pine !

Look how they tumble the blossom, the  
 mad little tits !

'Cuck-oo' Cuck-oo !' was ever a May  
 so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,  
 And swallow and sparrow and throstle,  
 and have your desire !

O merry my heart, you have gotten the  
 wings of love,  
 And flit like the king of the wrens with  
 a crown of fire

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay

#### WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes,  
 Time slips away  
 Sun sets, moon sets,  
 Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence'

'We shall both be gray'

'A month hence, a month hence.

'Far, far away'

'A week hence, a week hence'

'Ah, the long delay'

'Wait a little, wait a little,

You shall fix a day'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,

And that's an age away'

Blaze upon her window, sun,

And honour all the day

#### MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,

You send a flash to the sun

Here is the golden close of love,

All my wooing is done

Oh, the woods and the meadows,

Woods where we hid from the wet,

Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,

Meadows in which we met !

Light, to live in the vale  
 Thou flesh and lighten afar,  
 For thou art the golden morning of love,  
 And you are the morning star  
 Hark, I am coming I come,  
 By the low and stile and wood,  
 Oh, I'll see into thy eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires?  
 O heart, are you great enough for love?  
 I have heard of thorns and briars,  
 Over the thorns and briars,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Push for a million miles

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H. (1828-1853)

OHIII MDCCCXXXIII

Stroph. Son of God, immortal Love,  
 Whom we, that have not seen thy  
 face,  
 Thy faith and faith alone, embrace,  
 Believing where we cannot prove;

There are these o'er of light and shade,  
 Thou madest life in man and brute,  
 Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
 Is on the skull which thou hast made

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust  
 Thou madest man, he knows not  
 why,

He thinks he was not made to die,  
 And thou hast made him thou art just

Thou seemest human and divine,  
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou  
 Our wills are ours, we know not  
 how,

Our wills are ours, to make them thine

Our little systems have their day;

They have their day and cease to be.

They are but broken lights of thee,

And thou, O Lord, art more than they

We have but faith: we cannot know;

For knowledge is of things we see,

And yet we trust it comes from thee,

A beam in darkness: let it grow

Let knowledge grow from more to more,

But more of reverence in us dwell;

That mind and soul, according all,

May make one music as before,

B. vaster We are fools and slight;  
 We mock thee when we do not fear  
 But heap thy foolish ones to bear,  
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,  
 What seem'd my worth since I  
 began;

For merit lives from man to man,  
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,

Thy creature, whom I found so fair.

I trust he lives in thee, and there

I find him worthier to be loved

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,

Confusions of a wasted youth,

Forgive them where they fail in truth,

And in thy wisdom make me wise

1849

T

I

I HEARD it truth, with him who sings

To one clear harp in divers tones,

That men may rise on stepping-stones

Of their dead selves to higher things

But who shall so forecast the years

And find in loss a gain to match?

Or reach a hand thro' time to catch

The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven gloss

Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,

To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn'

## II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name thee the under lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock,  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns at ul  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to feel from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee

## III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run,  
'A web is wove across the sky',  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun

And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,  
A hollow form with empty hands

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good,  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away,  
My will is bondsman to the dark,  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should'st feel from the  
desire,  
Who scarcely darrest to inquire,  
'What is it makes me here so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years  
Break, thou deep vice of chilling  
tears,

That grief hath shewn into frost I

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the dark en'd eyes,  
With morning wakes the ill, and  
cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss'

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel,  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies,  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain

In words, like weeds I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the  
cold  
But that large grief which these  
enfold

Is given in outline and no more

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,  
That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more.  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is  
 bow'd,  
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave  
*Currents of the Ocean*  
 Ye know no more than I who wrought  
 At that last hour to please him well,  
 Who mused on all I had to tell,  
 And something written, something  
 thought,

Expecting still his advent home,  
 And ever met him on his way  
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to day,'  
 Or 'here to morrow will he come'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
 That sittest ringing golden hair,  
 And glad to find thyself so fair,  
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love'

For now her father's chimney glows  
 In expectation of a guest,  
 And thinking 'this will please him  
 best,'

She takes a riband or a rose,

For he will see them on to-night,  
 And with the thought her colour  
 burns,  
 And, having left the glass, she turns  
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
 Had fallen, and her future Lord  
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
 ford,  
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse

O what to her shall be the end?  
 And what to me remains of good?  
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
 And unto me no second friend

*VII*  
*Hellam's residence in London*  
 Dark house, by which once more I stand  
 Here in the long unlovely street,  
 Doors, where my heart was used to  
 beat  
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
 And like a-guilty thing I creep  
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here, but far away *in*  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
 On the bald street breaks the blank day

## VIII

A happy lover who has come  
 To look on her that loves him well,  
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway  
 bell,  
 And learns her gone and far from home,

He saddens, all the magic light  
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
 And all the place is dark, and all  
 The chambers emptied of delight

So find I every pleasant spot  
 In which we two were wont to meet,  
 The field, the chamber and the street,  
 For all is dark where thou art not

Yet as that other, *the happy glow* wandering there  
 In those deserted walks, may find  
 A flower beat with rain and wind,  
 Which once she foster'd up with care,

So seems it in my deep regret,  
 O my forsaken heart, with thee  
 And this poor flower of poesy  
 Which little cared for fades not yet

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
 I go to plant it on his tomb,  
 That if it can it there may bloom,  
 Or dying, there at least may die

*It lies where the house, in*  
Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er

So draw him home to those that mourn  
 In vain, a favourable speed  
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.



All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks

<sup>left half</sup>  
Sphere all your lights around, above,  
<sup>right half</sup>  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
prow,  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love,

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
I'll all my widow'd race be run,  
Deer as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me

## X

I hear the noise about thy keel,  
I hear the bell struck in the night  
I see the cabin window bright,  
I see the sailor at the wheel

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands,  
And letters unto trembling hands,  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life

So bring him we have idle dreams  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home bred fancies O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems  
To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God,

Thou if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom deep in brine,  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the  
furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn  
bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening  
towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main.

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall,  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in  
rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings,

Like her I go, I cannot stay,  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my friend?  
Is this the end of all my care?'  
And circle moaning in the air  
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and  
feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these,

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
 A void where heart on heart reposed,  
 And, where warm hands have prest  
 and closed,  
 Silence, till I be silent too

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
 An awful thought, a life removed,  
 The human-hearted man I loved,  
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
I do not suffer in a dream,  
For now so strange do these things  
seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
 And glance about the approaching  
 sails,  
 As tho' they brought but merchants'  
 bales,  
 And not the burthen that they bring

✓ XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
 That thou hadst touch'd the land  
 to-day,  
 And I went down unto the quay,<sup>land</sup>  
 And found thee lying in the port,<sup>place</sup>

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
 Should see thy passengers in rank  
 Come stepping lightly down the  
 plank,

And beckoning unto those they know,

And if along with these should come  
 The man I held as half-divine,  
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
 And ask a thousand things of home,

And I should tell him all my pain,  
 And how my life had droop'd of late,  
 And he should sorrow o'er my state  
 And marvel what possess'd my brain,

And I perceived no touch of change,  
 No hint of death in all his frame,  
 But found him all in all the same,  
 I should not feel it to be strange

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise  
 And roar from yonder dropping day  
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
 The rooks are blown about the skies,

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
 The cattle huddled on the lea,  
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
 The sunbeam strikes along the world.

And but for fancies, which aver  
 That all thy motions gently pass  
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud,  
 And but for fear it is not so,  
 The wild unrest that lives in woe  
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
 And onward drags a labouring breast,  
 And topples round the dreary west,  
 A looming bastion fringed with fire

XVI

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
 Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
 The touch of change in calm or storm,  
 But knows no more of transient form  
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
 And stunn'd me from my power to  
 think

And all my knowledge of myself,

And made me that delirious man  
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
 And flashes into false and true,  
 And mingles all without a plan?

## LVII

Thou comest, much wept for such a piece  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week the days go by  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid ocean, spare thee, sacred bark,  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee,  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run

## LVIII

'Tis well, 'tis something, we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land

'Tis little, but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me,

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## LIX.

The Danube to the Severn give  
The darken'd heart that beat no  
more,  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave

There twice a day the Severn fills,  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot  
fill,

I brim with sorrow's drowning song

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also fills,  
And I can speak a little then.

## LX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender  
vows,

Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the  
mind  
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
Another service such as this'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win,  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the  
breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
'How good! how kind! and he is gone'

XXI

I sing to thee thy rest below,  
 At the little grave round men we  
 I take the graves of the grave.

And make them pipes when a to blow

The traveller leaves me now and then,  
 As on the hill, will he seek  
 'Tis fellow would make weakness  
 weak,

And rich the waken hearts of men

Another answer, 'I'll be,  
 He has to make pride of you,  
 But what is that he has to gain  
 The price that comes to distance

A third is woth. 'Is this an hour  
 For you to remain burden so,  
 When more and more the people  
 throw

The chains and the net of civil power?

'A time to taken and to given,  
 When Science reaches forth her arms  
 To feel from world to world, and  
 charm

Her secret from the latest moon?

Behold, ye speak an idle thing  
 Ye never know the sacred dust  
 I do but sing because I must,  
 And pipe but as the linnet sing

And one is glad: her note is gay,  
 I love her little ones have ranged,  
 And one is sad: her note is changed,  
 Because her brood is stol'n away

XXII.

The path by which we turn did go,  
 Which led by tracts that pleased us  
 well,  
 Thro' four or five years more and fell,  
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
 And, crown'd with all the season  
 lent,  
 From April on to April went,  
 And glad at heart from May to May

But where the  
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
 As we descended following Hope,  
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man,

Who broke our fair companionship,  
 And spread his mantle dark and  
 cold,  
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
 And thine, that somewhere in the  
 waste

The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
 Or breaking into song by fits,  
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
 The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
 I wander, often falling lame,  
 And looking back to whence I came,  
 Or on to where the pathway leads,

And crying, How changed from where it  
 ran  
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was  
 dumb,  
 But all the livish hills would hum  
 The murmur of a happy Pan

When each by turns was guide to each,  
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
 And Thought leapt out to wed with  
 Thought

Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech,

And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could  
 bring,

And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood,

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady

## XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I saw?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isle- of night

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first Sun arose and set

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so  
great?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far,  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein?

## XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared,  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier birds in air,  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in  
two  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him

## XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way,  
I with it, for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can crunker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be.

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the  
keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes,

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth.  
Nor any want begotten rest

I hold it true, whate'er befall  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

1834, *W. S. W.*  
XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ  
The moon is hid - the night is still,  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and  
moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound

Each voice four changes on the wind.  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and  
peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy,  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with  
joy,

The merry merry bells of Yule

## XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chills regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
En'wine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and  
Wont,

That guard the portals of the house,

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new,  
Why should they miss their yearly  
due

Before their time? They too will die

## XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas  
hearth,  
A runy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all

We paused - the winds were in the beech -  
We heard them sweep the winter  
land;

And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each

Then echo like our voices rang;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year - impetuously we sang

We ceased - a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us - surely rest is meet  
'They rest,' we sud, 'their sleep is  
sweet,'

And silence follow'd, and we wept

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang 'They do not  
die

Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change,

'Rapt from the sickle and the fruil  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from  
night

O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was  
born

## XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four  
days?'  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful  
sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd,  
He told it not, or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's  
feet

With costly spikenard and with tears

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
prayers,

Whose loves in higher love endure,  
What souls possess themselves so  
pure,

Or is there blessedness like theirs?

## XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer  
air,

Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views,  
Nor thou with shadow'd hunt confuse  
A life that leads melodious days

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou ful not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## ✓ XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty, such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim

What then were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to  
choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die,

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent  
draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow  
house,

'The cheeks drop in, the body bows  
Man dies nor is there hope in dust'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive'  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or  
slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be,

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
'The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,

Half-dead to know that I shall die'

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods

## XXCVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
 We yield all blessing to the name  
 Of Him that made them current coin,

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
 Where truth in closest words shall  
 fail,  
 When truth embodied in a tale  
 Shall enter in at lowly doors

And so the Word had breath, and  
 wrought  
 With human hands the creed of  
 creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought,  
 Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
 And those wild eyes that watch the

wave

In roarings round the coral reef

## XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow  
 'Thou pratest here where thou art  
 least,

This faith has many a purer priest,  
 And many an abler voice than thou

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
 About the ledges of the hill'

*earthly muse*  
 And my Melpomene replies,  
 A touch of shame upon her cheek  
 'I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
 Of thy prevailing mysteries,

'For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
 And render human love his dues,

'But brooding on the dear one dead,  
 And all he said of things divine,  
 (And dear to me as sacred wine  
 To dying lips is all he said),

T

'I murmur'd, as I came along,  
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,  
 And loiter'd in the master's field,  
 And darken'd sanctities with song'

## XXAVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
 Tho' always under alter'd skies  
 The purple from the distance dies,  
 My prospect and horizon gone

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives

If any care for what is here  
 Survive in spirits render'd free,  
 Then are these songs I sing of thee  
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear

## XXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
 And answering now my random  
 stroke

With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
 To thee too comes the golden hour  
 When flower is feeling after flower,  
 But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—  
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
 And passes into gloom again

## XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
 And look on Spirits breathed away,  
 As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-flower'

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
 rise

To take her latest leave of home,  
 And hopes and light regrets that  
 come

Make April of her tender eyes,

3



And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love,

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each,

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full grown energies of heaven

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her  
boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low,  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands

## XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher,  
As mounts the heavenly altar fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes, here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change

Deep folly 't yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with  
might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death,  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields,

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me  
cold,

That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to  
thee,

Thro' all the secular to be,  
But evermore a life behind

## XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim—  
He still outstript me in the race,  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him

And so may Peace return us still,  
And he the much beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To ripen growth the mind and will

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves but knows not  
reaps

A truth from one that loves and knows?

*Jenny's philosophy of love*  
*20th Apr*  
If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its interval gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower

So then were nothing lost to man  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began,

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here  
Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rwaken with the dawning soul

## XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?  
 For here the man is more and more,  
 But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his herd

The days have vanish'd tore and tint,  
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
 Gives out at times (he knows not  
 whence)

A little flash, a mystic hunt,

And in the long harmonious years  
 (If Death so taste Lethæan springs),  
 May some dim touch of earthly  
 things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers

If such a dreamy touch should fill,  
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt  
 My guardian angel will speak out  
 In that high place, and tell thee all

## 2. XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
 What time his tender palm is prest  
 Against the circle of the breast,  
 Has never thought that 'this is I'

But as he grows he gathers much,  
 And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
 And finds 'I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may  
 begin,

As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their due,  
 Hard man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death

## XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and  
 flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back

So be it there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge shall  
 bloom

The eternal landscape of the past,

A lifelong tract of time rever'd,  
 The fruitful hours of still increase,  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching far,  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge

## XLVII

That each who seems a separate whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fusing  
 all

The skirts of self again, should fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside;  
 And I shall know him when we meet

And we shall sit at endless feast,

Enjoying each the other's good  
 What vaster dream can hit the mood  
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
 'Farewell' We lose ourselves in light'

## XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-  
 posed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn

Her care is not to part and prove,  
 She takes, when harsher moods  
 remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may  
 fit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love

And hence, indeed, she sports with words.

But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Shortswallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away

# XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall hisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that  
make

The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender pencil'd shadow play

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

# L

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the  
nerves prick

And tingle, and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer  
trust,  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and  
sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day

# LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no burseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden  
shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue  
Shall love be blamed for want of  
faith?

There must be wisdom with great  
Death

The dead shall look me thro' and thro'

Be near us when we climb or fall  
We watch like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all

# LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved,  
My words are only words, and move  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,  
The Spirit of true love replied,  
'Thou canst not move me from th  
side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?  
What record? not the sunless year  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue

'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin  
Abide thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl

LIII *Virtue is that best which is tried —*  
LV

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish  
noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green  
And dare we to this farcy give,  
That had the wild oat not been  
sown,  
The soil left barren, scarce had  
grown  
The grain by which a man may live?  
Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good define it well  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark and  
be

Procress to the Lords of Hell

LV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood,  
That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete,  
That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrill'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.  
Behold, we know not anything  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring  
So runs my dream. but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night  
An infant crying for the light  
And with no language but a cry

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Denies it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul?  
Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;  
That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear  
I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,  
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no  
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone,  
I care for nothing, all shall go  
'Thou makest thine appeal to me.  
I bring to life I bring to death  
The spirit does but mean the breath  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,  
Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,  
Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—  
Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

As a poet.

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him

O life is futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil

## LVII

Peace, come away the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song  
Peace, come away we do him  
wrong  
To sing so wildly let us go

me, let us go, your cheeks are pale,  
But half my life I leave behind  
Methinks my friend is richly shined,  
it I shall pass, my work will fail

it in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
that ever look'd with human eyes

hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead,  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore

## LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell,

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to  
day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall  
cease

The high Muse answer'd 'Wherefore  
grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave'

## LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life,  
As I confess it needs must be,

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good

My centred passion cannot move  
Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love,

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine

## LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is  
set

On one whose rank exceeds her own

He moving with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there

The little village looks forlorn,  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by  
At night she weeps, 'How vain  
am I!  
How should he love a thing so low?'

## LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies,  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time,

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,  
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
 night,  
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
 Where thy first form was made a man,  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
 Could make thee somewhat blench  
 or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale,  
 And fading legend of the past ,

And thou, as one that once declined,  
 When he was little more than boy,  
 On some unworthy heart with joy,  
 But lives to wed an equal mind ,

And breathes a novel world, the while  
 His other passion wholly dies,  
 Or in the light of deeper eyes  
 A matter for a flying smile

## LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
 And love in which my hound has  
 part,  
 Can hang no weight upon my heart  
 In its assumptions up to heaven ,

And I am so much more than these,  
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
 And yet I spare them sympathy,  
 And I would set their pains at ease

O mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
 As, unto vaster motions bound,  
 The circuits of thine orbit round  
 A higher height, a deeper deep

## LXIV

Lost thou look back on what hath been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,  
 Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green ,

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
 And breasts the blows of circum-  
 stance,  
 And grapples with his evil star ,

Who makes by force his merit known  
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
 And shape the whisper of the throne ,

And moving up from high to higher,  
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
 The pillar of a people's hope,  
 The centre of a world's desire ,

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
 When all his active powers are still,  
 A distant dearness in the hill,  
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
 While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ,

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
 And reaps the labour of his hands,  
 Or in the furrow musing stands ,  
 'Does my old friend remember me ?'

## LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ,  
 I'll a fancy trouble-tost  
 With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
 Till out of painful phases wrought  
 There flutters up a happy thought,  
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends

## LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
 You wonder when my fancies play  
 To find me gay among the gay,  
 Like one with any trifle pleased

The shade by which my life was crost,  
 Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
 And like to him whose sight is lost,

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
 Whose jest among his friends is free,  
 Who takes the children on his knee,  
 And winds their curls about his hand

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky,  
 His inner day can never die,  
 His night of loss is always there

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
 As slowly steals a silver flame  
 Along the letters of thy name,  
 And o'er the number of thy years

The mystic glory swims away,  
 From off my bed the moonlight dies;  
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray

And then I know the mist is drawn  
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
 And in the dark church like a ghost  
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn

## LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
 my breath,  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
 not Death,  
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
 When all our path was fresh with  
 dew,  
 And all the bugle breezes blew  
 Reveillé to the breaking morn

But what is this? I turn about,  
 I find a trouble in thine eye,  
 Which makes me sad I know not why  
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
 I wake, and I discern the truth,  
 It is the trouble of my youth  
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee

## LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
 That Nature's ancient power was  
 lost

The streets were black with smoke  
 and frost,

They chatter'd trifles at the door

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
 I found a wood with thorny boughs  
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
 I wore them like a civic crown

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
 From youth and babe and hoary  
 hairs

They call'd me in the public squares  
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child  
 I found an angel of the night,  
 The voice was low, the look was  
 bright,

He look'd upon my crown and smiled

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf  
 The voice was not the voice of grief,  
 The words were hard to understand

## LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
 When on the gloom I strive to paint  
 The face I know, the hues are faint  
 And mix with hollow masks of night,

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
 A hand that points, and palled shapes  
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought,

And crowds that stream from yawning  
doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive,  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores,

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still

## LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of  
wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole,

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something  
strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach

## LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar  
white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun,

Who ushered in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the  
rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower,

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same

As wan, as chill, as wild as now,  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
crime,  
When the dark hand struck down  
thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning  
star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day,  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground

## LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly  
wreath

I curse not nature, no, nor death,  
For nothing is that errs from law

We pass, the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God

O hollow wrath of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name

## LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race



So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd,

What practice howsoever expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of  
song  
To stir a little dust of praise

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the  
sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been

So here shall silence guard thy fame,  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of  
space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end,

Take wings of foresight, lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew,

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak

Ere these have clothed their brachy  
bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain,  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that  
lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
My bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks,  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something  
else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same,  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise

1835 Christmas.  
LXXVIII  
Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas  
hearth,  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas eve

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
 No single tear, no mark of pain  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!

No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry

## LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,'—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
 I know thee of what force thou art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in Nature's mint,  
 And hill and wood and field did print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves, the same  
 All winds that roam the twilight came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
 To black and brown on kindred brows

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his likeness fitted mine

## LXXV

If any vague desire should rise,  
 That holy Death ere Arthur died  
 Had mov'd me kindly from his side,  
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes,

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
 A grief as deep as life or thought,  
 But stay'd in peace with God and man

I make a picture in the brain,  
 I hear the sentence that he speaks,  
 He bears the burthen of the weeks  
 But turns his burthen into gain

His credit thus shall set me free,  
 And, influence-rich to soothe and  
 save,  
 Unused example from the grave  
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me

## LXXVI

Could I have said while he was here,  
 'My love shall now no further range;  
 There cannot come a mellow  
 change,

For now is love mature in ear'

Love, then, had hope of richer store  
 What end is here to my complaint?  
 This haunting whisper makes me  
 faint,

'More years had made me love thee more

But Death returns an answer sweet  
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat'

## LXXVII

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and  
 face,  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my faith

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks,  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak

LXXVIII *Spring*

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long,  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong,  
 Delaying long, delay no more

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping wells of fire

O thou, new year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song

## LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and  
kiss

On all the branches of thy blood,

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine,  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life  
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee,  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clasp their cheeks, to call them mine  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never lighted fire

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest,

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair,  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hur,

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should furl from off the globe,

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content

## LXXXV 85

This truth came borne with bier and pall  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead,

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd,  
And whether love for him have  
drain'd  
My capabilities of love,

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half express  
And loyal unto kindly laws

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there,

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of  
him

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die

Whatever way my days decline,  
I rest and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine.

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might ex-  
press  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtling intellect

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men

I woo your love I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow  
brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak  
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come

'I watch thee from the quiet shore,  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach,  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall,  
'Tis hard for thee to fathom this,  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all'

So hold I commerce with the dead,  
Or so methinks the dead would  
speak;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall  
prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend,

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
 I, clasping brother hands, never  
 I could not, if I would, transfer  
 The whole I felt for him to you

For which be they that hold apart  
 The promise of the golden hours?  
 First love, first friendship, equal  
 powers,  
 That marry with the virgin heart

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
 That beats within a lonely place,  
 That yet remembers his embrace,  
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring

## LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest from the gorgeous  
 gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of spice, and rapt below  
 Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,  
 And shadowing down the horned  
 flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
 The full new life that feeds thy  
 breath  
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
 and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
 On leagues of odour streaming far,  
 To where in yonder orient star  
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

I must be idle the reverend wills  
 In which of old I wore the gown,  
 I roved at random thro' the town,  
 And saw the tumult of the halls,

And heard once more in college fanes  
 The storm their high-built organs  
 make,  
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
 The prophet blazon'd on the pines,

And caught once more the distant shout,  
 The measured pulse of racing oars  
 Among the willow, paced the shores  
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gay flats again, and felt  
 The same, but not the same; and  
 lost

Up that long walk of limes I past  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt

Another name was on the door  
 I linger'd; all within was noise  
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and  
 boys

That crash'd the planks and beat the floor

Where once we held debate, a hand  
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
 And labour, and the changing mart,  
 And all the framework of the land,

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
 But send it slackly from the string,  
 And one would pierce an outer ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there,

And last the master-bowman, he,  
 Would cleave the mark A willing  
 ear  
 We lent him Who, but hung to  
 hear

The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
 grace  
 And music in the bounds of law,  
 To those conclusions when we saw  
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise,  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings,  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go

## LXXXIX

Witch elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
bright,  
And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore,

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town

He brought an eye for all he saw,  
He mixt in all our simple sports,  
They pleased him, fresh from brawl-  
ing courts

And dusty parhous of the law

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning  
dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn

Or in the all golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods,

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream,

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and  
gloss

The picturesque of man and man'  
We talk'd the stream beneath us  
ran,

The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave,  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the homed hours

## XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first  
could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind,

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
 Were closed with wail, resume their  
 life,  
 They would but find in child and wife  
 An iron welcome when they rise

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
 To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
 To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
 To count their memories half divine,

But if they came who past away,  
 Behold their brides in other hands,  
 The hard heir strides about their  
 lands,  
 And will not yield them for a day

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
 Not less the yet loved sire would  
 make  
 Confusion worse than death, and  
 shake  
 The pillars of domestic peace

Oh dear, but come thou back to me  
 Whatever change the years have  
 wrought,  
 I find not yet one lonely thought  
 That cries against my wish for thee

## XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
 And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,  
 Or underneath the barren bush  
 Flits by the sea blue bird of March,

Come, wear the form by which I know  
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers,  
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
 Be large and lucid round thy brow

When summer's hourly mellowing change  
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
 That ripple round the lonely grange,

Come not in watches of the night,  
 But where the sunbeam broodeth  
 warm,  
 Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
and like a finer light in light.

## XCII

If any vision should reveal  
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
 As but the canker of the brain;  
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
 Together in the days behind,  
 I might but say, I hear a wind  
 Of memory murmuring the past

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
 A fact within the coming year,  
 And tho' the months, revolving near,  
 Should prove the phantom-warning true

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
 But spiritual presentiments,  
 And such refraction of events  
 As often rises ere they rise

## XCIII

I shall not see thee Dare I say  
 No spirit ever brake the band  
 That strays him from the native land  
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay

No visual shade of some one lost,  
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
 Where all the nerve of sense is  
 numb,  
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
 O, from the distance of the abyss  
 Of tenfold complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter, hear  
 The wish too strong for words  
 name,  
 That in this blindness of the frame  
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought  
would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest

But when the heart is full of aim,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within

## xcv

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry,  
 And genial warmth, and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn,

And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd  
 The brook alone far-off was heard,  
 And on the board the fluttering urn

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine  
 capes

And woolly breasts and beaded eyes,

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd  
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field

But when those others, one by one,  
 Withdrew themselves from me and  
 night,

And in the house light after light  
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had  
 been,

In those fall'n leaves which kept  
 their green,

The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and  
 strange

Was love's dumb cry defying change  
 To test his worth, and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward back,  
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell

So word by word, and line by line,  
 The dead man touch'd me from the  
 past,  
 And all at once it seem'd at last  
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
 About empyreal heights of thought,  
 And came on that which is, and  
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time—the shocks of  
 Chance—

The blows of Death At length  
 my trance

Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame  
 In matter moulded forms of speech,  
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach

Thro' memory that which I became

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
 The knolls once more where, couch'd  
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
 A breeze began to tremble o'er  
 The large leaves of the sycamore,  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,  
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and  
 swung

The heavy folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said



'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away,  
 And East and West, without a  
 breath,  
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and  
 death,  
 (To broaden into boundless day

## XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet hearted, you, whose light-  
 blue eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies.  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil born

I know not one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out  
There lives more faith in honest  
doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
 strength,  
 He would not make his judgment  
 blind,  
 He faced the spectres of the mind  
 And laid them thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,  
 And Power was with him in the  
 night,  
 Which makes the darkness and the  
 light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
 While Israel made their gods of  
 gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud

## XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees,  
He finds on misty mountain ground  
His own vast shadow glory crown'd,  
He sees himself in all he sees,

Two partners of a married life—  
 I look'd on these and thought of thee  
 In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye  
Their hearts of old have beat in  
tune,

Their meetings made December June  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away,  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
 Whate'er the futhless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart

He thruds the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold she thinks him kind

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss  
She knows not what his greatness is  
For that, for all, she loves him more

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows,  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
 She darkly feels him great and wise,  
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
 'I cannot understand I love'

## XCVIII

You leave us you will see the Rhine,  
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
 When I was there with him; and go  
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
 That City All her splendour seems  
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me  
 I have not seen, I will not see  
 Vienna, rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
 The birth, the bridal, friend from  
 friend  
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
 By each cold hearth, and sadness  
 flings  
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings  
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
 With statelier progress to and fro  
 The double tides of chariots flow  
 By park and suburb under brown

Of luster leaves; nor more content,  
 He told me, lives in any crowd,  
 When all is gay with lamps, and  
 loud  
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain,  
 And wheels the circled dance, and  
 breaks  
 The rocket molten into flakes  
 Of crimson or in emerald rain

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 So loud with voices of the birds,  
 So thick with lowings of the herds,  
 Day, when I lost the flower of men,

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles  
 fast  
 By meadows breathing of the past,  
 And woodlands holy to the dead,

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
 A song that slights the coming care,  
 And Autumn laying here and there  
 A fiery finger on the leaves,

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
 To myriads on the genial earth,  
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
 And unto myriads more, of death

O wheresoever those may be,  
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
 To day they count as kindred souls,  
 They know me not, but mourn with me

C.

I climb the hill from end to end  
 Of all the landscape underneath,  
 I find no place that does not breathe  
 Some gracious memory of my friend,

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
 Or low morass and whispering  
 reed,  
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold,

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
 That hears the latest linnet trill,  
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
 And haunted by the wrangling daw,

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock,  
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
 To left and right thro' meadowy  
 curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock,

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
 And each reflects a kinder day,  
 And, leaving these, to pass away,  
 I think once more he seems to die

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
 The tender blossom flutter down,  
 Unloved, that beech will gather  
 brown,

This maple burn itself away,

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
 Ray round with flames her disk of  
 seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed  
 With summer spice the humming air,

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
 The brook shall babble down the  
 plain,  
 At noon or when the lesser sun  
 Is twisting round the polar star,

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
 And flood the haunts of fern and  
 brake,

Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove,

Till from the garden and the wild  
 A fresh association blow,  
 And year by year the landscape  
 grow  
 Familiar to the stranger's child,

As year by year the labourer tills  
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,  
 And year by year our memory fades  
 From all the circle of the hills



CII

We leave the well beloved place  
 Where first we grazed upon the sky,  
 The roofs, that heard our earliest  
 cry,  
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
 As down the garden walks I move,  
 Two spirits of a diverse love  
 Contend for loving masterdom

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
 Long since its matin song, and  
 heard  
 The low love-language of the bird  
 In native hazels tassel hung'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
 With thy lost friend among the  
 bowers,  
 And this hath made them trebly dear'

These two have striven half the day,  
 And each prefers his separate claim,  
 Poor rivals in a losing game,  
 That will not yield each other way

I turn to go my feet are set  
 To leave the pleasant fields and  
 farms,  
 They mix in one another's arms  
 To one pure image of regret

CIII

On that last night before we went  
 From out the doors where I was bred,  
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
 Which left my after morn content

Methought I dwell'd within a hall,  
 And maidens with me distant hills  
 I from hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river sliding by the wall

The hall with harp and carol rang  
 They sang of what is wise and good  
 And graceful In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang,

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
 The shape of him I loved, and love  
 For ever then flew in a dove  
 And brought a summons from the sea

And when they learnt that I must go  
 They wept and wail'd, but led the  
 way  
 To where a little shallop lay  
 At anchor in the flood below,

And on by many a level mead,  
 And shadowing bluff that made the  
 banks,  
 We glided winding under ranks  
 Of iris, and the golden reed,

And still as faster grew the shore  
 And roll'd the floods in grander  
 space,  
 The maidens gather'd strength and  
 grace  
 And presence, lordlier than before,

And I myself, who sat apart  
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every  
 limb,  
 I felt the thews of Anakim,  
 The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
 And one would chronicle the history  
 Of that great race, which is to be,  
 And one the dropping of a star;

Until the far mid-greening tides  
 Began to form, and we to draw  
 From deep to deep, to where we saw  
 A great ship lift her shining sides

The men we loved were there on deck,  
 But it rose as large as man he bent  
 To give us up the side I went,  
 And I fell in silence on my deck

Who ever there was dead with one mind  
 Perceiv'd that error; I told them wrong;  
 'We soried thee here,' they said,  
 'as long,

And wait'd to leave us now I chind?'

So right I was they could not win  
 An answer from my lips, but he  
 Reviving, 'Enter likewise ye  
 And go with us' they enter'd in

And while the wind began to sweep  
 A music out of them, and shroud,  
 We were led her toward crimson cloud  
 That landlike steps along the deep

### New Home, or Christmas 1837

The time draws near the birth of Christ,  
 The moon is hid, the night is still,  
 A single church below the hill  
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
 That speaks at this hour of rest  
 A single murmur in the breast,  
 That these are not the bells I know

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
 In lands where not a memory strays,  
 Nor hindmost breathes of other days,  
 But all is new unhallow'd ground

ci.

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
 This hurch, let this holly stand  
 We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas eve

Our father's dust is left alone  
 And silent under other snows  
 Here in due time the woodbine  
 blows

The violet comes, but we are gone

No more shall myward grief abuse  
 The general hour with mask and  
 mime;

For change of place, like growth of  
 time,

Has broke the bond of dying use

Let eases that petty shadows cast,  
 By which our lives are chiefly  
 proved,

A little spare the night I loved,  
 And hold it solemn to the past

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm,  
 For who would keep an ancient form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
 blown,

No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and  
 lead

The closing cycle rich in good

CVI New Year

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light  
 The year is dying in the night;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow  
 The year is going, let him go,  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no more,  
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife,  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times,  
Ring out, ring out my mournful  
rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand,  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be

CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet Fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and  
clangs

Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast But fetch  
the wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass,

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat,  
Be cheerful minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by,

We keep the day With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns?  
And on the depths of death there  
swims

The reflex of a human face

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us  
wise,

Whatever wisdom sleep with thee

*Charles Hall*

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never  
dry,

The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk,

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of  
man,

Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course,

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom,  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood,

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England, not the schoolboy her  
The blind hysterics of the Celt,

And manhood fused with female grace  
 In such a sort, the child would twine  
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
 And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
 Have look'd on if they look'd in  
 vain,  
 My shame is greater who remain,  
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise

## CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
 The men of rathe and riper years  
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
 The proud was half disarm'd of  
 pride,  
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
 To flicker with his double tongue

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
 The flippant put himself to school  
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why ,

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
 And felt thy triumph was as mine ,  
 And loved them more, that they  
 were thine,  
 The graceful tact, the Christian art ,

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
 But mine the love that will not tire,  
 And, born of love, the vague desire  
 That spurs an imitative will

## CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
 To him who grasps a golden ball,  
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ,

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
 His want in forms for fashion's  
 sake,  
 Will let his coltish nature break  
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale

For who can always act ? but he,  
 To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
 Each office of the social hour  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind ,

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye,  
 Where God and Nature met in light ,

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of "gentleman,"  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use

## CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate  
 eyes  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom

For what wert thou ? some novel power  
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
 And hope could never hope too  
 much,  
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
 And tracts of calm from tempest  
 made,  
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought

## CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ,  
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with  
thee  
 Which not alone had guided me,  
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been

A life in civic action warm,  
 A soul on highest mission sent,  
 A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
 Becoming, when the time has birth,  
 A lever to uplift the earth  
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
 With agonies, with energies,  
 With overthrowings, and with cries,  
 And undulations to and fro

## CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall  
 rail  
 Against her beauty? May she mix  
 With men and prosper? Who shall  
 fix

Her pillars? Let her work prevail

But on her forehead sits a fire  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire

Half grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
 She cannot fight the fear of death  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power Let her know her place,  
 She is the second, not the first

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain, and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul  
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and  
 hour  
 In reverence and in clarity

## CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of quick  
 About the flowering squares, and  
 thick

By ashen roots the violets blow

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea,

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change their  
 sky

To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land, and in my breast  
 Spring wakens too, and my regret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest

## CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
 That keener in sweet April wakes,  
 And meets the year, and gives and  
 takes

The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all the songs, the stirring air,  
 The life re-orient out of dust,  
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
 In that which made the world so fur

Not all regret the face will shine  
 Upon me, while I muse alone,  
 And that dear voice, I once have  
 known,  
 Still speak to me of me and mine

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
 For ays of happy commune dead,  
 Less yearning for the friendship  
 fled,  
 Than some strong bond which is to be

## CXLVII

O days and hours, your work is this  
 To hold me from my proper place,  
 A little while from his embrace,  
 For fuller gain of after bliss

That out of distance might ensue  
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet,  
 And unto meeting when we meet,  
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
 And every spin of shade that  
 stirs,  
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
 And all the courses of the suns.

## CXLVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant labouring in his youth,  
 Nor dream of human love and truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime,

But trust that those we call the dead  
 Are breathers of an ampler day  
 For ever nobler ends They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
 And grew to seeming-random forms,  
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man,

Who throve and branch'd from clime to  
 clime,  
 The herald of a higher race,  
 And of himself in higher place,  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more,  
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
 Like glories, move his course, and  
 show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
 And heated hot with burning fears  
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use Arise and fly  
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
 Move upward, working out the beast,  
 And let the ape and tiger die

## CXLIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
 So quickly, not as one that weeps  
 I come once more, the city sleeps,  
 I smell the meadow in the street,

I hear a chirp of birds, I see  
 Betwixt the black fronts long-with  
 drawn  
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
 And bright the friendship of thine  
 eye,  
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
 I take the pressure of thine hand

## CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath  
 I think we are not wholly brain,  
 Magnetic mockeries, not in vain,  
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
 Death,

Not only cunning casts in clay  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
 His action like the greater ape,  
 But I was born to other things

## CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the burned sun  
 And ready, thou, to die with him,  
 Thou watchest all things ever dim  
 And dimmer, and a glory done



The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
 The boat is drawn upon the shore,  
 Thou listenest to the closing door,  
 And life is darken'd in the brain

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
 By thee the world's great work is heard  
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird,  
 Behind thee comes the greater light

The market boat is on the stream,  
 And voices hail it from the brink,  
 Thou hear'st the village hammer  
 clink,  
 And see'st the moving of the team

Sweet Hesper Phosphor, double name  
 For what is one, the first, the last,  
 Thou, like my present and my  
 past,  
 Thy place is changed, thou art the  
 same

## CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
 While I rose up against my doom,  
 And yearn'd to burst the folded  
 gloom,  
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
 The strong imagination roll  
 A sphere of stars about my soul,  
 In all her motion one with law,

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
 Divide us not, be with me now,  
 And enter in at breast and brow,  
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
 And like an inconsiderate boy,  
 As in the former flash of joy,  
 I slip the thoughts of life and death,

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
 And every thought breaks out a rose

## CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree  
 O earth, what changes hast thou  
 seen!

There where the long street roars,  
 hath been  
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
 From form to form, and nothing  
 stands,  
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
 Like clouds they shape themselves and  
 go

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
 And dream my dream, and hold it  
 true,  
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
 I cannot think the thing farewell

## CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless,  
 Our dearest faith; our ghastlies  
 doubt,  
 He, They, One, All; within, with  
 out,

The Power in darkness whom we guess,

I found Him not in world or sun,  
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,  
 Nor thro' the questions men may  
 try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
 I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
 And heard an ever-breaking shore  
 That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt  
 The freezing reason's colder part,  
 And like a man in wrath the heart  
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt'

No, like a child in doubt and fear  
 But that blind clamour made me  
 wise,  
 Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But, crying, knows his father near,

And what I am beheld again  
 What is, and no man understands,  
 And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men

## CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
 A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,  
 She did but look through dimmer  
 eyes,  
 Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
 Because he felt so fix'd in truth.

And if the song were full of care,  
 He breathed the spirit of the song,  
 And if the words were sweet and  
 strong

He set his royal signet there

Abiding with me till I sail  
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
 And this electric force, that keeps  
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail

## CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
 Within his court on earth, and sleep  
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
 Whomovesabout from placeto place,  
 And whispers to the worlds of space,  
 In the deep night, that all is well

## CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear,  
 Well roars the storm to those that  
 hear  
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
 The red fool-fury of the Seine  
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
 And him, the lazar, in his rags  
 They tremble, the sustaining crags,  
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood,  
 The fortress crashes from on high,  
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell,  
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
 And smilest, knowing all is well

## CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
 Is comrade of the lesser faith  
 That sees the course of human things

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
 Of onward time shall yet be made,  
 And throned races may degrade,  
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
 If all your office had to do  
 With old results that look like new,  
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious  
 lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil cooperant to an end

CVXV

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal,  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher,

Known and unknown, human, divine,  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye,  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not  
die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine.

Strange friend, past, present, and to be,  
Loved deeper, darker understood,  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee

CVXVI

Thy voice is on the rolling air,  
I hear thee where the waters run,  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair

What art thou then? I cannot guess,  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less

My love involves the love before,  
My love is vaster passion now,  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
thou,

I seem to love thee more and more

Far off thou art, but ever nigh,  
I have thee still, and I rejoice  
I prosper, circled with thy voice,  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die

CVXVII

O living will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer  
shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul

O true and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay,  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house, nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this,

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thence three years - they went  
and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the  
frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more,

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid set,  
And moulded in colossal calm

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before,

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee, they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good

And thou art worthy - full of power,  
 As gentle, liberal-minded, great,  
 Consistent, wearing all that weight  
 Of learning lightly like a flower

But now set out the noon is near,  
 And I must give away the bride  
 She fears not, or with thee beside  
 And me behind her, will not fear

For I that danced her on my knee,  
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
 That shielded all her life from harm  
 At last must part with her to thee,

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead,  
 Their pensive tablets round her head,  
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear The ring is on,  
 The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
 The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of  
 twain

Her sweet 'I will' has made you one

Now sign your names, which shall be  
 read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
 By village eyes as yet unborn,  
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
 The joy to every wandering breeze,  
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells

O happy hour, and happier hours  
 Await them Many a merry face  
 Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers

O happy hour, behold the bride  
 With him to whom her hand I gave  
 They leave the porch, they pass the  
 grave

That has to day its sunny side

To day the grave is bright for me,  
 For them the light of life increased,  
 Who stay to share the morning feast,  
 Who rest to night beside the sea

Let all my genial spirits advance  
 To meet and greet a whiter sun,  
 My drooping memory will not shun  
 The foaming grape of eastern France

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
 And hearts are warm'd and faces  
 bloom,  
 As drinking health to bride and  
 groom

We wish them store of happy days

Nor count me all to blame if I  
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
 Perchance, perchance, among the  
 rest,

And, tho' in silence, wishing joy

But they must go, the time draws on,  
 And those white-favour'd horses  
 wait;

They rise, but linger, it is late,  
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone

A shade falls on us like the dark  
 From little cloudlets on the grass,  
 But sweeps away as out we pass  
 To ringe the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
 And talk of others that are wed,  
 And how she look'd, and what he  
 said,

And back we come at fall of dew

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
 The shade of passing thought, the  
 wealth

Of words and wit, the double health,  
 The crowning cup, the three times-three,

And last the dance,—till I retire.

Dumb is that tower which spake so  
 loud,  
 And high in heaven the streaming  
 cloud,

And on the downs a rising fire

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
 Till over down and over dale  
 All night the shining vapour sail  
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
 And catch at every mountain head,  
 And o'er the friths that branch and  
 spread  
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills,  
 And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
 With tender gloom the roof, the  
 wall,  
 And breaking let the splendour fall  
 To spangle all the happy shores  
 By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
 And, star and system rolling past,  
 A soul shall draw from out the vast  
 And strike his being into bounds,  
 And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
 Result in man, be born and think,  
 And act and love, a closer link  
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
 On knowledge, under whose com  
 mind  
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their  
 hand  
 Is Nature like an open book ;  
 No longer half-akin to brute,  
 For all we thought and loved and did,  
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
 Of what in them is flower and fruit,  
 Whereof the man, that with me trod  
 This planet, was a noble type  
 Appearing ere the times were ripe.  
 That friend of mine who lives in God,  
That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves

## MAUD, A MONODRAMA.

### PART I

#### I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
 The red ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death'

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
 His who had given me life—O father ! O God ! was it well ?—  
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground  
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell

#### III

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a vast speculation had fail'd  
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air

#### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard  
 The shrill edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night

## V.

Villainy somewhere ' whose ? One says, we are villains all.  
Not he his honest fame should at least by me be maintained  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd

## VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace ? we have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own ,  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone ?

## VII

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word ?  
Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword

## VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not ? I have neither hope nor trust ;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die who knows ? we are ashes and dust

## IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie,  
Peace in her vineyard—yes !—but a company forges the wine

## X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

## XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights

## XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war ? better, war ! loud war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones

## XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three decler out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home —

## XIV

What ' am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?  
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

## XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

## XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

## XVII

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad,  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire—  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;  
I play'd with the girl when a child, she promised then to be fair

## XVIII

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse mouth when my father dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

## XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad She may bring me a curse  
No, there is fatter game on the moor, she will let me alone  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own

## II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm God grant I may find it at last!  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful let it be granted her where is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)  
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more, nothing more, if it had not been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound,  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave

## IV

## I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

## II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;  
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar,  
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall,  
 And up in the high Hall garden I see her pass like a light;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

## III

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?  
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd.  
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor,  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face  
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud,  
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor



## IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal,  
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way.  
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal,  
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike  
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey

## V

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower,  
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour,  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame,  
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed

## VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race  
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man  
 He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

## VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor,  
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice  
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain,  
 For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice

## VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil  
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?  
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide  
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?  
 Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout?  
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide

## IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
 Far off from the clamour of lives belied in the hubbub of lies,  
 From the long neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise  
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,  
The honey of poison flowers and all the measureless ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above,  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land

II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny  
sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English  
green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her  
grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that  
cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid  
and mean,  
And myself so languid and base

III

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find  
Still! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a  
choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are  
bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale  
I had fancied it would be fair

II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile  
so sweet,  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd

III

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame,  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen gray delight

IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet

## V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet

## VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd

## VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and  
ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool

## VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and  
good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday morn,

And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have  
grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly met,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half turn'd to stone

## IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and  
trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour, her  
hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## X.

I have play'd with her when a child,  
She remembers it now we meet  
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

## I

Did I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm chair?

## II

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty so let it be'

III

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty so let it be'

VIII.

She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone,  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone;  
And once, but once, she lifted her  
eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own,  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-branded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone,  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and  
sigh'd  
'No surely, now it cannot be pride'

IX

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light

X.

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendour  
plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear

II

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I

III

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well

This broad-brimm'd hawkler of holy things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war ' can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
Put down the passions that make earth Hell !

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ' cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear ;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind

## IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy '  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men

## V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie

## VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

## XI

## I

O let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet,  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day

## II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me,  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day

## XII

## I

Birds in the high Hall garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling

## II

Where was Maud ? in our wood,  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together

## III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringin' thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies

## IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately f'  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately

## V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour '  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her

## VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadow  
And left the daisies rosy

## VII

Birds in the high Hall garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?  
One is come to woo her

## VIII

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling

## XIII

## I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !  
I past him, I was crossing his lands ,  
He stood on the path a little aside ,  
His face, as I grin, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ,  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands

## II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship ,  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare

## III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
That old man never comes to his place  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ,  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ,  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet -  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side ,  
Her mother has been a thing complete  
However she came to be so allied

And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother

## IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV

## I

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ,  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate ,  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower

## II

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden gate  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as  
white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight

Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,  
to glide,

Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down  
to my side,

There were but a step to be made

## III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold

## IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
 But the rivulet on from the lawn  
 Running down to my own dark wood,  
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it  
 swell'd

Now and then in the dim gray dawn,  
 But I look'd, and round, all round the  
 house I beheld

The death-white curtain drawn,  
 Felt a horror over me creep,  
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
 Knew that the death-white curtain meant  
 but sleep,

Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool  
 of the sleep of death

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer,  
 That if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then some one else may have much to  
 fear,

But if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then I should be to myself more dear  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else

## XVI

## I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight,  
 And so that he find what he went to  
 seek,

And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and  
 drown

His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone for  
 a week.

But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O this is the day!

O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way,  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,

And dream of her beauty with tender  
 dread,

From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as the  
 crest

Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilis of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave

## II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me?  
 I trust that it is not so

## III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
 From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
 Till the maiden yields

Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth

When the happy Yes  
 Falts from her lips,  
 Pass and blush the news  
 Over glowing ships,

Over blowing seas,  
 Over sers at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
 Blush it thro' the West.

Till the red man dance  
 By his red cedar-tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
 Leap, beyond the sea.

Blush from West to East,  
 Blush from East to West  
 Till the West is East,  
 Blush it thro' the West  
 Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth

## XVIII

## I

I have led her home, my love, my only  
 friend  
 There is none like her, none  
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
 And sweetly, on and on  
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
 Full to the brims, close on the promised  
 good

## II

None like her, none  
 Just now the dry-tongued larks' putter-  
 ing tail.  
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden  
 wall,  
 And shook my heart to think she comes  
 once more,  
 But even then I heard her close the  
 door,  
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and she  
 is gone

## III.

There is none like her, none  
 Nor will be when our summers have de-  
 ceased  
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
 In the long breeze that streams to thy  
 delicious East,  
 Sighing for Lebanon,  
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here in-  
 creased,  
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
 And looking to the South, and fed  
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
 And haunted by the starry head  
 Of her whose gentle will has changed my  
 fate,

And made my life a perfumed altar-flame,  
 And over whom thy darkness must have  
 spread  
 With such delight as theirs of old, thy  
 great  
 Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
 whom she came

## IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches  
 sway,  
 And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
 Go in and out as if at merry play,  
 Who am no more so all forlorn,  
 As when it seem'd far better to be born  
 To labour and the mattock-harden'd  
 hand,  
 Than nursed at ease and brought to un-  
 derstand  
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
 That makes you tyrants in your iron  
 skies,  
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and  
 brand  
 His nothingness into man

## V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a  
 pearl  
 The countercharm of space and hollow  
 sky,  
 And do accept my madness, and would die  
 To save from some slight shame one  
 simple girl.

## VI

Would die for sullen-seeming Death  
 may give  
 More life to Love than is or ever was  
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to  
 live  
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass,  
 It seems that I am happy, that to me  
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea



## VII

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,  
 And teach true life to fight with mortal  
     wounds  
 O, why should Love, like men in drink-  
     ing-songs,  
 Spice his fur banquet with the dust of  
     death?  
 Make answer, Maud my bliss  
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving  
     kiss,  
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven  
     here  
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself  
     more dear'

## VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
 And hark the clock within, the silver  
     knell  
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal  
     white,  
 And died to live, long as my pulses play,  
 But now by this my love has closed her  
     sight  
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n  
     away  
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies  
     dwell  
 Among the fragments of the golden day  
 May nothing there her maiden grace  
     affright!  
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy  
     spell.  
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
 My own heart's heart, my ownest own,  
     farewell,  
 It is but for a little space I go  
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the  
     glow  
 Of your soft splendours that you look so  
     bright?  
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
     below,

Beat with my heart more blest than heart  
     can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
     woe  
 That seems to draw—but it shall not be  
     so  
 Let all be well, be well

## XIX.

## I

Her brother is coming back to-night  
 Breaking up my dream of delight

## II

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
 I have walk'd awake with Truth  
 O when did a morning shine  
 So rich in atonement as this  
 For my dark-dawning youth,  
 Darken'd watching a mother decline  
 And that dead man at her heart and  
     mine  
 For who was left to watch her but I?  
 Yet so did I let my freshness die

## III

I trust that I did not talk  
 To gentle Maud in our walk  
 (For often in lonely wanderings  
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
 But I trust that I did not talk,  
 Not touch on her father's sin  
 I am sure I did but speak  
 Of my mother's faded cheek  
 When it slowly grew so thin,  
 That I felt she was slowly dying  
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with  
     debt  
 For how often I caught her with eyes all  
     wet,  
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
 A world of trouble within!

## IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
 To speak of the mother she loved  
 As one scarce less forlorn,  
 Dying abroad and it seems apart

From him who had ceased to share her  
heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung o'er her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born,  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet  
breath

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
death

Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

1

But the true blood spilt had in it a heart  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncanceled, had been so  
sweet

And none of us thought of a something  
beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of the  
child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be recon-  
ciled,

And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run  
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled!

11

But then what a flint is he!  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before,  
And this was what had reddened her  
cheek

When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse

VIII

Kind? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the hearth—  
Rough but kind? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud? that we're not amiss  
Well, rough but kind, why let it be so  
For shall not Maud have her will?

IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay,  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours,  
O then, what then shall I say?  
If ever I should forget,  
My God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet!

X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry,  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to night.

XX

I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to day

To beguile her melancholy,  
 The Sultan, as we name him,—  
 She did not wish to blame him—  
 But he vexed her and perplexed her  
 With his worldly talk and folly  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claims her as his due?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,  
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
 Be the neater and completer,  
 For nothing can be sweeter  
 Than maiden Maud in either

## II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
 Our ponderous squire will give  
 A grand political dinner  
 To half the squirelings near,  
 And Maud will wear her jewels,  
 And the bird of prey will hover,  
 And the titmouse hope to win her  
 With his chirrup at her ear

## III

A grand political dinner  
 To the men of many acres,  
 A gathering of the Tory,  
 A dinner and then a dance  
 For the maids and marriage-makers,  
 And every eye but mine will glance  
 At Maud in all her glory

## IV

For I am not invited,  
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
 I am all as well delighted,  
 For I know her own rose garden,  
 And mean to linger in it  
 Till the dancing will be over,  
 And then, oh then, come out to me  
 For a minute, but for a minute,

Come out to your own true lover,  
 That your true lover may see  
 Your glory also, and render  
 All homage to his own darling,  
 Queen Maud in all her splendour

## XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
 And bringing me down from the Hall  
 This garden-rose that I found,  
 Forgetful of Maud and me,  
 And lost in trouble and moving round  
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
 And trying to pass to the sea,  
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
 My Maud has sent it by thee  
 (If I read her sweet will right)  
 On a blushing mission to me,  
 Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be  
 Among the roses to-night'

## XXII

## I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone,  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted  
 abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is blown

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she  
 loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky,  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
 The flute, violin, bassoon,  
 All night has the casement  
 stirred  
 To the dancers dancing in tune,  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon

## IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
 With whom she has heart to be gay  
 When will the dancers leave her alone?  
 She is weary of dance and play'  
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day,  
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
 The last wheel echoes away

## V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
 In babble and revel and wine  
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
 For one that will never be thine?  
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the  
 rose,  
 'For ever and ever, mine'

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my  
 blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall,  
 And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to  
 the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all,

## VII

From the meadow your walks have left  
 so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree,  
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea,  
 But the rose was awake all night for your  
 sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me,  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one,  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with  
 curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun

## X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear,  
 She is coming, my life, my fate,  
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is  
 near,'  
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is  
 late,'  
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear,'  
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait'

## XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet,  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed,  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead,  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red

## PART II

## I

## I

'THE fault was mine, the fault was  
 mine'  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the  
 hill?  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land—  
 What is it, that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising  
 sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate,

For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,

He came with the babe faced lord,  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool

He fiercely gave me the he,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was giping and grinning by  
Struck for himself an evil stroke,  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe,

For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,

And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless coe,

That must have life for a blow  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?  
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly'  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know,  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till  
I die, till I die.

## II

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land  
It is gone, and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,

When 'they should burst and drown with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,

The little hearts that know not how to forgive

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,

Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,

That sting each other here in the dust;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II

## I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

## II

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd—  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

## IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand!

## V

Breton, not Briton, here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—

Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

## VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost,  
An old song vexes my ear,  
But that of Lamech is mine

## VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever to part—  
But she, she would love me still,  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out

## VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and  
thought  
It is his mother's hair

## IX.

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?

Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
good,  
While I am over the sea!  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and  
high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the  
deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die

## III

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die

## IV

## I

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

## II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth

## III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee  
Ah Christ that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
 It lightly winds and stirs  
 In a cold white robe before me,  
 When all my spirit reels  
 At the shouts, the tongues of lights,  
 And the roaring of the wheels

## V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
 Half in dreams I sorrow after  
 The delight of early skies  
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
 For the meeting of the morrow,  
 The delight of happy laughter,  
 The delight of low replies

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
 And a dewy splendour falls  
 On the little flower that clings  
 To the turrets and the walls,  
 'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
 And the light and shadow fleet  
 She is walking in the meadow,  
 And the woodland echo rings,  
 In a moment we shall meet,  
 She is singing in the meadow  
 And the rivulet at her feet  
 Ripples on in light and shadow  
 To the ballad that she sings

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
 My bird with the shining head,  
 My own dove with the tender eye?  
 But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
 cry,  
 There is some one dying or dead,  
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd,  
 For a tumult shakes the city,  
 And I wake, my dream is fled,  
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
 Without knowledge, without pity,  
 By the curtains of my bed  
 That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
 Mix not memory with doubt,  
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
 Pass and cease to move about  
 'Tis the blot upon the brain  
 That will show itself without

## IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
 And the yellow vapours choke  
 The great city sounding wide,  
 The day comes, a dull red ball  
 Wript in drifts of lurid smoke  
 On the misty river tide

## X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
 I steal, a wasted frame,  
 It crosses here, it crosses there,  
 Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
 The shadow still the same;  
 And on my heavy eyelids  
 My anguish hangs like shame

## XI

Alas for her that met me,  
 That heard me softly call,  
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
 At the quiet evenfall,  
 In the garden by the turrets  
 Of the old manorial hall

## XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
 From the realms of light and song,  
 In the chamber or the street,  
 As she looks among the blest,  
 Should I fear to greet my friend  
 Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
 Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
 To the regions of thy rest'?

## XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
 And the shadow flits and fleets  
 And will not let me be,  
 And I loathe the squares and streets,  
 And the faces that one meets,  
 Hearts with no love for me

Always I long to creep  
 Into some still cavern deep,  
 There to weep and weep, and weep  
 My whole soul out to thee

## V.

## I

Dead, long dead,  
 Long dead !

And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of passing  
 feet,

Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing and  
 clatter,

And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it  
 is not so ;

To have no peace in the grave, is that  
 not sad ?

But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go ,  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad

## II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man ,  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days  
 that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
 read ,

It is that which makes us loud in the  
 world of the dead ,

There is none that does his work, not  
 one ,

A touch of their office might have  
 sufficed,

But the churchmen fain would kill their  
 church,

As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress ,  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess ,  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press ,  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient—all for what ?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
 head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead

## IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold ,  
 Not let any man think for the public  
 good,  
 But babble, merely for babble  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from the  
 top of the house ,  
 Everything came to be known  
 Who told *him* we were there ?

## V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not  
 back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where  
 he used to be ,  
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-  
 grown whelp to crack ,  
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl,  
 and die

## VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat ,  
 I know not whether he came in the  
 Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
 holes .



Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes,  
     poor souls !  
 It is all used up for that

## VII

Tell him now she is standing here at my  
     head ,  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ,  
 He may take her now , for she never  
     speaks her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ,  
 She comes from another stiller world of  
     the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow, by night, when the season is  
     good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but  
     blood ,  
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral  
     bride ,  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
     brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side?

## IX

But what will the old man say ?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
     day ,  
 Yet now I could even weep to think  
     of it ,  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse in  
     the pit ?

## X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ,  
 But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
 Are scarcely even akin

## XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
     enough?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
     rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
 May be still I am but half-dead ,  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ,  
 I will cry to the steps above my head  
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart  
     will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper

## PART III

## VI

## I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing .  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Christotee—  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—  
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast

## II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire—  
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a langu'd note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
 Shall shake its thread'd tears in the wind no more

## III

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true)  
 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die'  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death,

## IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told,  
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd—  
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;  
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire,  
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done.  
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire

## V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind :  
 It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill.  
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd

## IDYLLS OF THE KING

## IN TWELVE BOOKS

*Flos Regum Anglorum.* — JOSEPH OF EXETER

## DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held  
 them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
 These Idylls

And indeed He seems to me  
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
 'Who revered his conscience as his  
 king,

Whose glory was, redressing human wrong,  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
 to it,

Who loved one only and who claved to her—  
 Her—over all whose realms to their last  
 isle,

Commingled with the gloom of imminent  
 war,

The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
 Darkening the world We have lost  
 him he is gone

We know him now all narrow jealousies  
 Are silent, and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
 wise,

With what sublime repression of himself,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly,  
 Not swaying to this faction or to that,  
 Not making his high place the lawless  
 perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
 For pleasure, but thro' all this tract of  
 years

Wearing the white flower of a blameless  
 life,

Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
 In that fierce light which beats upon a  
 throne,

And blackens every blot for where is he,  
 Who dures foreshadow for an only son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstrun'd, than his!  
 Or how should England dreaming of his  
 sons

Hope more for these than some inheritance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her poor—  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still  
 endure,

Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star  
 Which shone so close beside Thee that  
 ye made

One light together, but has past and leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendour

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,  
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,  
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

## ✓ THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Camelhard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none other  
child ;

And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land ,  
And still from time to time the heathen  
host

Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was  
left

And so there grew great tracts of wilder-  
ness,

Wherein the beast was ever more and  
more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur  
came

For first Aurelius lived and fought and  
died,

And after him King Uther fought and died,  
But either ful'd to make the kingdom  
one

And after these King Arthur for a space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,

Drew all their petty princedoms under  
him,

Their king and head, and made a realm,  
and reign'd

And thus the land of Camelhard was  
waste,

Thick with wet woods, and many a beast  
therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the  
beast ,

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and  
bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the  
fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the King  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and  
then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat

To human sucklings , and the children,  
housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would  
growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf  
like men,

Worse than the wolves And King  
Leodogran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,  
And Caesar's eagle then his brother king,  
Urien, assail'd him last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth  
with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's  
heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,

He knew not whither he should turn for  
aid

But—for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
Who cried, ' He is not Uther's son '—the  
King

Sent to him, saying, ' Arise, and help us  
thou '

For here between the man and beast we  
die '

And Arthur yet had done no deed of  
arms,

But heard the call, and came and  
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him  
pass ,

But since he neither wore on helm or  
shield

The golden symbol of his kinghood,  
But rode a simple knight among his  
knights,

And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she  
saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life

Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and  
pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. Then he  
drave  
The heathen, after, slew the beast, and  
fell'd  
The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the  
knight  
And so return'd

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
Of those great Lords and Barons of his  
realm  
Flash'd forth and into war for most of  
these,  
Colleguing with a score of petty kings,  
Made head against him, crying, 'Who  
is he  
That he should rule us? who hath proven  
him  
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor  
voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King,  
This is the son of Anton, not the King'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle,  
felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,  
And thinking as he rode, 'Her father said  
That there between the man and beast  
they die  
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with  
me?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be  
join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my  
work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own  
realm

Victor and lord But were I join'd with  
her,  
Then might we live together as one life,  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten  
it,  
And power on this dead world to make  
it live'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the  
tale—  
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle  
bright  
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the  
world  
Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
And even in high day the morning star  
So when the King had set his banner  
broad,  
At once from either side, with trumpet-  
blast,  
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto  
blood,  
The long-lanced battle let their horses  
run  
And now the Barons and the kings pre-  
vail'd,  
And now the King, as here and there  
that war  
Went swaying, but the Powers who walk  
the world  
Made lightnings and great thunders over  
him,  
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main  
might,  
And mightier of his hands with every  
blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw the  
kings  
Carados, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumber  
land,  
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morgnmore,  
And Lot of Orkney Then, before a voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself alone  
And all the world asleep, they swerved  
and brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the  
brands

That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho' they  
yield'

So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord  
Helaugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved  
And honour'd most 'Thou dost not  
doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me  
to-day'

'Sir and my hege,' he cried, 'the fire of  
God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field  
I know thee for my King!' Whereat the  
two,

For each had warled either in the fight,  
Swore on the field of death a deathless  
love

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in  
man'

Let chance what will, I trust thee to the  
death'

Then quickly from the foughten field  
he sent

Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leodo-  
gran,

Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee  
well,

Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in  
heart

Debating—'How should I that am a  
king,

However much he help me at my need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
And a king's son?'—lifted his voice, and  
call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
He trusted all things, and of him required  
His counsel—'Knowest thou aught of  
Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and  
said,

'Sir King, there be but two old men that  
know

And each is twice as old as I, and one  
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
King Uther thro' his magic art, and one  
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bley's,  
Who taught him magic, but the scholar  
ran

Before the master, and so far, that Bley's  
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
In one great unal-book, where after years  
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
By this King Arthur as by thee to day,  
Then beast and man had had their share  
of me

But summon here before us yet once more  
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere'

Then, when they came before him, the  
King said,

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser  
fowl,

And reason in the chase but wherefore  
now

Do these your lords stir up the heat of  
war,

Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-  
selves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay'  
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
spake—

For bold in heart and act and word was  
he,

Whenever slander breathed against the  
King—

'Sir, there be many rumours on this  
head

For there be those who hate him in their  
hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways are  
sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less than  
man

And there be those who deem him more  
 than man,  
 And dream he dropt from heaven but  
 my belief  
 In all this matter—so ye care to learn—  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's  
 time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that  
 held  
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne  
 And daughters had she borne him,—one  
 whereof,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
 cent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne  
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love  
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
 So loathed the bright dishonour of his  
 love,  
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to war  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain  
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
 walls,  
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
 And there was none to call to but himself  
 So, compass'd by the power of the king,  
 Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
 And with a shameful swiftness after  
 ward,  
 Not many moons, King Uther died him-  
 self,  
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
 After him, lest the realm should go to  
 wrack  
 And that same night, the night of the new  
 year,  
 By reason of the bitterness and grief  
 That vexed his mother, all before his time  
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
 Until his hour should come, because the  
 lords  
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
 Wild beasts, and surely would have torn  
 the child

Piccemeal among them, had they known;  
 for each  
 But sought to rule for his own self and  
 hand,  
 And many hated Uther for the sake  
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the  
 child,  
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife  
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him  
 with her own,  
 And no man knew. And ever since the  
 lord  
 Have foughten like wild beasts among  
 themselves,  
 So that the realm has gone to wrack  
 but now,  
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour had  
 come)  
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the  
 hall,  
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your  
 lord,"  
 A hundred voices cried, "Away with him!  
 No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,  
 Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his  
 craft,  
 And while the people clamour'd for a king,  
 Had Arthur crown'd, but after, the great  
 lords  
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.  
  
 Then while the King debated with  
 himself  
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,  
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
 Or Uther's son, and born before his  
 time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Sud by these three, there came to Camelot  
 hard,  
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two  
 sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
 cent,  
 Whom as he could, not as he would, the  
 King  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at  
 meat,

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer  
seas  
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his  
men  
Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye this  
king—  
So many those that hate him and so  
strong,  
So few his knights, however brave they  
be—  
Hath body enow to hold his foemen  
down?'

'O King,' she cried 'and I will tell  
thee: few,  
Few, but all brave, all of one mind with  
him,  
For I was near him when the savage yells  
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
Crown'd on the cross, and his warriors  
cried,  
"Be thou the king, and we will work thy  
will  
Who love thee." Then the King in low  
deep tones,  
And simple words of great authority,  
Bound them by so strait vows to his own  
self,  
That when they rose, knighted from  
kneeling, some  
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
who wakes  
Half-bundled at the coming of a light

'But when he spoke and cheer'd his  
Table Round  
With large, alive, and comfortable words,  
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
A momentary likeness of the King  
And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
And those around it and the Crucified,  
Down from the casement over Arthur,  
smote  
Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three  
rays,  
One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
Who stood in silence near his throne, the  
friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
Sweet faces, who will help him at his  
need

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose  
vast wit  
And hundred winters are but as the hands  
Of loyal vassals toiling for their hege

'And near him stood the Lady of the  
Lake,  
Who knows a subtler magic than his  
own—  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful

She gave the King his huge cross-bilted  
sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out a mist  
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
gloom,

But there was heard among the holy  
hymns

A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms  
May shake the world, and when the  
surface rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our  
Lord

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
Before him at his crowning borne, the  
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so  
bright

That men are blinded by it—on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
world,

"Take me," but turn the blade and ye  
shall see,  
And written in the speech ye speak your-  
self,

"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's  
face

Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast  
away



Is yet far-off" So this great brand the  
king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
down'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but  
thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister,' and she said,  
'Daughter of Gorlois and Igerne am I,'  
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd  
the King  
She answer'd, 'These be secret things,'  
and sign'd

To those two sons to pass, and let them be  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw  
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half heard, the same that  
afterward  
Struck for the throne, and striking found  
his doom

And then the Queen made answer,  
'What know I?

For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
And dark in hair and eyes am I, and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness, but this King is  
fair

Beyond the race of Britons and of men  
Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawn'ng of my life  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the  
world"

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear ye  
such a cry?

But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell  
thee true

He found me first when yet a little maid  
Beset I had been for a little fault

Whereof I was not guilty, and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of  
heath,  
And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead,  
and he—

I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,  
can walk

Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted  
my heart,

And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
And many a time he came, and evermore  
As I grew greater grew with me, and sad  
At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
was I,

Stern too at times, and then I loved him  
not,

But sweet again, and then I loved him  
well

And now of late I see him less and less,  
But those first days had golden hours for  
me,

For then I surely thought he would be  
king

'But let me tell thee now another tale  
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they  
say,

Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his life.  
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the  
mage,

And when I enter'd told me that himself  
And Merlin ever served about the King,  
Uther, before he died, and on the night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still King, and passing forth to  
breathe,

Then from the castle gateway by the  
chasm

Descending thro' the dismal night—a  
night

In which the bounds of heaven and earth  
were lost—

Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
thereof

A dragon wing'd, and all men seem to  
 bring with a ring people on the decks,  
 And go on the towers seen. And then  
 the two  
 Drop to the rocks, and watch'd the great  
 wave fall,  
 Wave after wave, each higher than the  
 last,  
 Till last a mighty wave, more than half the  
 deep  
 And full of people, all plung'd  
 down, and all the wave was in a flame  
 And down the waste and in the foam was  
 borne  
 A naked king, and made to Merlin's feet,  
 Who stoop'd and caught the babe, and  
 cried "The king!"  
 Here is a fear for Lohr! And the  
 surge  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the  
 strand  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he gave the word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
 So that the old man he were clothed in fire,  
 And yet only if auster follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars. "And this same  
 child," he said,  
 "Is he who reigns, nor could I part in  
 peace  
 Till this were told." And saying this the  
 seer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of  
 death,  
 Not ever to be question'd any more.  
 So on the further side, out when I met  
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were  
 truth—  
 The shining dragon and the naked child  
 Descending in the glory of the seas—  
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
 In riddling triplets of old time, and said  
 "Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in  
 the sky!  
 A young man will be wiser by and by;  
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.  
 Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the  
 sea!  
 And truth is this to me, and that to thee,

And truth or clothed or naked let it be  
 Rain, sun, and rain! and the free  
 blossom blows  
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he  
 who knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep he  
 goes."

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me, but  
 thou  
 Fearest not to give this King thine only child,  
 Guinevere—so great bards of him will sing  
 Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old  
 Ringing and ringing thro' the minds of  
 men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
 Speal of the King, and Merlin in our  
 time  
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn  
 Tho' men may wound him that he will  
 not die,  
 But pass, again to come; and then or now  
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
 Till these and all men hail him for their  
 king."

Sorespake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
 But musing "Shall I answer yea or nay?"  
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,  
 and saw,  
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
 Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
 king,  
 Now looming, and now lost, and on the  
 slope  
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
 was driven,  
 Fire glimpsed, and all the land from  
 roof and rick,  
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with  
 the haze  
 And made it thicker, while the phantom  
 king  
 Sent out at times a voice, and here or there  
 Stood one who pointed toward the voice,  
 the rest  
 Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of  
 ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours,'  
 Till with a wink his dream was changed,  
     the haze  
 Descended, and the solid earth became  
 As nothing, but the King stood out in  
     heaven,  
 Crown'd And Leodogran awoke, and  
     sent  
 Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
 Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom  
     he loved  
 And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride  
     forth  
 And bring the Queen, --and watch'd him  
     from the gates  
 And Lancelot past away among the  
     flowers,  
 (For then was latter April) and return'd  
 Among the flowers, in May, with Guine  
     vere

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
     saint,  
 Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
     King

That morn was married, while in stunless  
     white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
 And glorying in their vows and him, his  
     knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy  
 Far shone the fields of May thro' open  
     door,

The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
 The Sun of May descended on their King,  
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in their  
     Queen,

Roll'd incense, and there past along the  
     hymns

A voice as of the waters, while the two  
 Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless  
     love

And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is  
     mine

Let chance what will, I love thee to the  
     death !'

To whom the Queen replied with drooping  
     eyes,

'King and my lord, I love thee to the  
     death !'

And holy Dubric spread his hands and  
     spake,

'Reign ye, and live and love, and make  
     the world

Other, and may thy Queen be one with  
     thee,

And all this Order of thy Table Round  
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
     King !'

So Dubric sud, but when they left the  
     shrine

Great Lords from Rome before the portal  
     stood,

In scornful stillness gazing as they past,  
 Then while they paced a city all on fire  
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets  
     blew,

And Arthur's knighthood sang before the  
     King --

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white  
     with May,

Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd  
     away !'

Blow thro' the living world--"Let the  
     King reign "

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in  
     Arthur's realm ?'

Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon  
     helm,

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the  
     King reign

'Strike for the King and live ! his  
     knights have heard

That God hath told the King a secret  
     word

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the  
     King reign

'Blow trumpet ! he will lift us from  
     the dust

Blow trumpet ! live the strength and die  
     the lust !'

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let  
     the King reign

'Strike for the King and die! and if  
thou diest,  
The King is King, and ever wills the  
highest.  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let  
the King reign

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his  
May!  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let  
the King reign

'The King will follow Christ, and we  
the King  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret  
thing  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign'

So sang the knighthood, moving to their  
hall  
There at the banquet those great Lords  
from Rome,  
The slowly fading mistress of the world,  
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of  
yore

But Arthur spake, 'Behold, for these have  
sworn  
To wage my wars, and worship me their  
King,  
The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,  
And we that fight for our fair father  
Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,  
No tribute will we pay' so those great  
lords  
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome

And Arthur and his knighthood for a  
space  
Were all one will, and thro' that strength  
the King  
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles over-  
came  
The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
and reign'd

## ✓ THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE  
THE MARRIAGE OF CERTAIN  
CYPRINE AND FINE  
BALIN AND BALAN  
MERLIN AND VIVIAN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.  
THE HOLY GRAIL.  
PELLEAS AND ETGARRE  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
GUINIEVER

### GARETH AND LYNETTE

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
Stared at the spate A slender-shafted  
Pine

Lost footing, fell, and so was whurl'd away  
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as  
a false knight

Or evil king before my lance if lance  
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,  
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—

And yet thou art but swollen with cold  
snows

And mine is living blood. thou dost His  
will,

The Maker's, and not knowest, and I  
that know,  
Have strength and wit, in my good  
mother's hall  
Linger with vacillating obedience,  
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and  
whistled to—

Since the good mother holds me still a  
child!

Good mother is bad mother unto me!  
A worse were better, yet no worse  
would I

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put  
force

To weary her ears with one continuous  
prayer,

Until she let me fly, discased to sweep  
In ever highering eagle-circles up  
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash  
them dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will  
To cleanse the world Why, Gawain,  
when he came

With Modred hither in the summertime,  
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the  
judge

Then I so shook him in the saddle, he  
sud,

"Thou hast half prevail'd against me"  
said so—he—

Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute  
For he is always sullen what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering round  
her chur

Ask'd, 'Mother, thou ye count me still  
the child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child?'  
She laugh'd,

'Thou art but a wild goose to question  
it'

'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he  
said,

'Being a goose and rather tame than wild  
Hear the child's story' 'Yea, my well-  
beloved,

An 'twere but of the goose and golden  
eggs'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling  
eyes,

'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of  
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay,  
For thus an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye reach, on such a palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours  
And there was ever haunting round the  
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and  
thought

"An I could climb and lay my hand upon  
it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
kings"

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,  
One, that had loved him from his child-  
hood, caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou  
break thy neck,

I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,  
Sweet mother, neither climb nor brake  
his neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away'

To whom the mother said,

'True love sweet son, had ris'd himself  
and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure to  
him'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling  
eyes,

'Gold? said I gold?—ye then why he  
or she

Of whoso'er it was or half the world  
Had ventured—' and the thing I spake of  
been

Were gold—but this was all of that true  
steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the  
storm,

And all the little fowl were flurried at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in the  
nest,

That sent him from his senses let me go'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and  
sud,

'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd  
out'

For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the Barons' war,  
And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies  
there

A jet-warm corpse, and yet unburnable,

No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,  
nor knows

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love  
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm  
the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the  
wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often  
chance

In those brain-stunning shocks, and  
tourney-falls,

Frights to my heart, but stay follow  
the deer

By these tall firs and our fast-filling burns,  
So make thy manhood mightier day by  
day,

Sweet is the chase and I will seek thee  
out

Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace  
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone  
year,

Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
I know not thee, myself, nor anything  
Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more boy  
than man'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for  
child,

Hear yet once more the story of the child  
For, mother, there was once a King, like  
ours

The prince his heir, when tall and  
marriageable,

Ask'd for a bride, and thereupon the  
King

Set two before him One was fair,  
strong, arm'd—

But to be won by force—and many men  
Desired her ; one, good lack, no man  
desired

And these were the conditions of the  
King.

That save he won the first by force, he  
needs

Must wed that o'her, whom no man  
desired,

A red faced bride who knew herself so vile,

That evermore she long'd to hide herself,  
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—  
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died  
of her

And one—they call'd her Fame, and  
one,—O Mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you—  
Shame.

Man am I grown, a man's work must I do  
Follow the deer ? follow the Christ, the  
King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow  
the King—

Else, wherefore born ?'

To whom the mother said,  
'Sweet son, for there be many who deem  
him not,

Or will not deem him, wholly proven  
King—

Albeit in mine own heart I knew him  
King,

When I was frequent with him in my  
youth,

And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted  
him

No more than he, himself, but felt him  
mine,

Of closest kin to me yet—wilt thou leave  
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine  
all,

Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
King ?

Stay, till the cloud that settles round his  
birth

Hath lifted but a little Stay, sweet son'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not  
an hour,

So that ye yield me—I will walk thro'  
fire,

Mother, to gain it—your full leave to  
go

Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd  
Rome

From off the threshold of the realm, and  
crush'd

The Idolaters, and made the people free ?  
Who should be King save him who  
makes us free ?'

So when the Queen, who long had  
sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which  
he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk thro'  
fire?  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the  
smoke  
Ay, go then, an ye must only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee  
knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother,—I demand'

And Gareth cried,  
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go  
Nay—quick' the proof to prove me to  
the quick.'

But slowly spake the mother looking  
at him,  
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to  
Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and  
drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the  
bar  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and  
a day'

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby, so should he rest with  
her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms

Silent while as Gareth, then replied,  
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,  
And I shall see the jousts Thy son am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must  
obey  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will,

For hence will I, disguised, and hire my  
self  
To serve with scullions and with kitchen  
knaves,  
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the  
King'

Gareth awhile linger'd The mother's  
eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he  
turn'd,  
Perplexed his outward purpose, till an hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with  
full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to  
dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his  
birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went

The three were clad like tillers of the  
soil  
Southward they set their faces The birds  
made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into  
green,  
And the live green had kindled into  
flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on  
the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Came  
lot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal  
mount,  
That rose between the forest and the field  
At times the summit of the high city  
flash'd,  
At times the spires and turrets half-way  
down  
Prick'd thro' the mist, at times the great  
gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below.  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd

Then those who went with Gareth were  
amazed,  
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord  
Here is a city of Enchanters, built  
By fairy Kings' The second echo'd him,  
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man  
at home  
To Northward, that this King is not the  
King,  
But only chngeling out of Fairyland,  
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
And Merlin's glamour' Then the first  
again,  
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
But 'll a vision'

Gareth answer'd them  
With laughter, swearing he had glamour  
enow  
In his own blood, his prncedom, youth  
and hopes,  
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea,  
So push'd them all unwilling toward the  
gate  
And there was no gate like it under  
heaven  
For barefoot on the keystone, which was  
lined  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
The Lady of the Lake stood all her dress  
Wept from hersides as water flowing away,  
But like the cross her great and goodly  
arms  
Stretch'd under all the cornice and  
upheld  
And drops of water fell from either hand,  
And down from one a sword was hung,  
from one  
A censer, either worn with wind and  
storm,  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish,  
And in the space to left of her, and right,  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
Were giddy gazing there, and over all  
High on the top were those three Queens,  
the friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need.

T

Then those with Gareth for so long a  
space  
Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd  
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-  
ings  
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl  
they call'd  
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive'  
  
And Gareth likewise on them fixt his  
eyes  
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to  
move  
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd  
Back from the gate started the three, to  
whom  
From out thereunder came an ancient  
man,  
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my  
sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the soil,  
Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
The glories of our King but these, my  
men,  
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)  
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come  
From Fairyland, and whether this be built  
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens,  
Or whether there be any city at all,  
Or all a vision and this music now  
Hath scared them both, but tell thou  
these the truth'

Then that old Seer made answer play  
ing on him  
And saying, 'Son, I have seen the good  
ship sail  
Keel upwrd, and mst downward, in  
the heavens,  
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air  
And here is truth, but an it please thee  
not,  
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it  
me  
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son,  
They came from out a sacred mountain  
cleft  
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in  
hand,

Y



And bauld it to the music of their harps  
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,  
For there is nothing in it as it seems  
Saving the King tho' some there be that  
hold

The King a shadow, and the city real  
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou  
pass

Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
become

A thrall to his enchantments, for the King  
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame  
A man should not be bound by, yet the  
which

No man can keep, but, so thou dread to  
swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide  
Without, among the cattle of the field  
For as ye heard a music, like now  
They are building still, seeing the city is  
built

To music, therefore never built at all  
And therefore built for ever

Gareth spake  
Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine  
own beard  
That looks as white as utter truth, and  
seems

Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall  
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath  
been

To thee fair spoken?

But the Seer replied,  
'Know ye not then the Riddling of the  
Bards?

"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"  
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,  
And all that see thee, for thou art not who  
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou  
art

And now thou goest up to mock the King,  
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
Turn'd to the right, and past along the  
plain,  
Whom Gareth looking after said, 'My  
men,

Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
Here on the threshold of our enterprise  
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I  
Well, we will make amends

With all good cheer  
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with  
his train

Camelot, - city of shadowy palaces  
And stately, rich in emblem and the work  
Of ancient kings who did their days in  
stone,

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at  
Arthur's court,  
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-  
where

At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening  
peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire to  
heaven

And ever and anon a knight would pass  
Outward, or inward to the hall his arms  
Clash'd; and the sound was good to  
Gareth's ear

And out of bower and casement shyly  
glanced  
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of  
love;

And all about a healthful people step'd  
As in the presence of a gracious king

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall  
The splendour of the presence of the  
King

Throned, and delivering doom - and  
look'd no more -

But felt his young heart hammering in his  
ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a  
lie

The truthful King will doom me when I  
speak

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
Of those tall knights, that ranged about  
the throne,

Clear honour shining like the dewy star

Of dawn, and faith in their great King,  
with pure  
Affection, and the light of victory,  
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain

Then came a widow crying to the King,  
'A boon Sir King' Thy father, Uther,  
rest  
From my dear lord a field with violence  
For how-so'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
We yielded not and then he rest us of it  
'Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye  
gold or field?'  
To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my  
lord,  
The field was pleasant in my husband's  
eye'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field  
again,  
And thrice the gold for Uther's use  
thereof,  
According to the years No boon is here,  
But justice, so thy say be proven true  
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father  
did  
would shape himself a right'

And while she pirst,  
Came yet another widow crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King' Thine enemy, King,  
am I  
With thine own hand thou slewest my  
dear lord,  
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
When Lot and many another rose and  
fought  
Against thee, saying thou wert basely  
born  
held with these, and loathe to ask thee  
ought  
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my  
son  
Thrill'd in his castle, and hath starved  
him dead,  
And standeth seized of that inheritance  
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left  
the son

So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
Grant me some knight to do the battle  
for me,  
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my  
son'

Then strode a good knight forward,  
crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King' I am her kinsman, I  
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the  
man'

Then came Sir Kay, the sentschal, and  
cried,  
'A boon, Sir King' ev'n that thou grant  
her none,  
This ruler, that hath mock'd thee in full  
hall—  
None, or the wholesome boon of gyve  
and gag'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help the  
wrong'd  
Thro' all our realm The woman loves  
her lord  
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and  
hates'  
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the  
flames,  
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee  
dead,  
And Uther slit thy tongue but get thee  
hence—  
Lest that rough humour of the kings of  
old  
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,  
Go likewise, lay him low and slay him  
not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge the  
right,  
According to the justice of the King  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
Who lived and died for men, the man  
shall die'

Then came in hall the messenger of  
Mark,  
A name of evil savour in the land,  
The Cornish king In either hand he  
bore  
What dazzled all, and shone far off as  
shines

A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest  
gold,  
Which down he laid before the throne,  
and knelt,  
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot,  
For having heard that Arthur of his grace  
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,  
knight,  
And, for himself was of the greater state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honour all the  
more,  
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of  
gold,  
In token of true heart and fealty

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to  
rend  
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there 'The  
goodly knight!  
What ' shall the shield of Mark stand  
among these?'  
For, midway down the side of that long  
hall  
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and  
some blank,  
There ran a treble range of stony  
shields,—  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the  
hearth  
And under every shield a knight was  
named  
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall,  
When some good knight had done one  
noble deed,  
His arms were carven only, but if twain  
His arms were blazon'd also, but if none,  
The shield was blank and bare without a  
sign  
Saving the name beneath, and Gareth  
saw  
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and  
bright,  
And Modred's blank as death, and  
Arthur cried  
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth

' More like are we to reave him of his  
crown  
Than make him knight because men call  
him king  
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd  
their hands  
From war among themselves, but left  
them kings,  
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them  
we enroll'd  
Among us, and they sit within our hall  
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name  
of king,  
As Mark would sully the low state of churl  
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,  
Return, and meet, and hold him from  
our eyes,  
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,  
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of  
plots,  
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside am-  
bushings—  
No fault of thine—let Kay the seneschal  
Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-  
fied—  
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand  
be seen '

And many another suppliant crying  
came  
With noise of ravage wrought by beast  
and man,  
And evermore a knight would ride away  
Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his  
men,  
Approach'd between them toward the  
King, and ask'd,  
' A boon, Sir King (his voice was all  
ashamed),  
For see ye not how weak and hungerworn  
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to  
serve  
For meat and drink among thy kitchen  
knaves  
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my  
name  
Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,

'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon'

But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,

The master of the meats and drinks, be thine'

He rose and past, then Kay, a man of mien

Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now'

This fellow hath broken from some Abbey,  
where,

God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,  
However that might chance' but an he  
work,

Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir  
Seneschal,

Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,  
'and all the hounds,

A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost  
not know.

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,  
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and  
hands

Large, fair and fine '—Some young lad's  
mystery—

But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy  
is noble-natured Treat him with all  
grace,

Lest he should come to shame thy judging  
of him'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of  
mystery?

Think ye this fellow will poison the  
King's dish?

Nay, for he spake too fool-like mystery'

Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd  
For horse and armour fair and fine,  
forsooth'

Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see  
thou to it

That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some  
fine day

Undo thee not—and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;  
Ate with young lads his portion by the  
door,

And couch'd at night with grumpy kitchen  
knaves.

And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,  
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,  
Would hustle and harry him, and labour  
him

Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set  
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew  
wood,

Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd  
himself

With all obedience to the King, and  
wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease  
That graced the lowliest act in doing it  
And when the thralls had talk among  
themselves,

And one would praise the love that linkt  
the King

And Lancelot—how the King had saved  
his life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the  
King's—

For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,  
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—  
Gareth was glad Or if some other told,

How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,

On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,  
Anaked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,

'He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'—

Gareth was glad But if their talk were  
foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud

That first they mock'd, but, after, rever-  
enced him

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale  
Of knights, who siced a red life bubbling

way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held  
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates

Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
would come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind  
Among dead leaves, and drive them all  
apart

Or when the thralls had sport among  
themselves,

So there were any trial of mastery,  
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone  
Was counted best, and if there chanced  
a joust,

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,  
Would hurry thither, and when he saw  
the knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave,  
And the spear spring, and good horse  
reel, the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy

So for a month he wrought among the  
thralls,  
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good  
Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him  
swear,

And saddening in her childless castle, sent,  
Between the in crescent and de crescent  
moon,

Arms for her son, and loosed him from  
his vow

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of  
Lot

With whom he used to play at tourney  
once,

When both were children, and in lonely  
haunts

Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
And each at either dash from either end—  
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth  
joy

He laugh'd, he sprang 'Out of the  
smoke, at once

I leap from Sutan's foot to Peter's knee—  
These news be mine, none other's—nay,  
the King's—

Descend into the city whereon he sought  
The King alone, and found, and told him  
all

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in  
a tilt

For pastime, yea, he said it joust can I

Make me thy knight—in secret I let my  
name

Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I  
spring

Like flame from ashes'

Here the King's calm eye  
I tell on, and check'd, and made him flush,  
and bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd  
him,

'Son, the good mother let me know thee  
here,

And sent her wish that I would yield thee  
thine

Make thee my knight? my knights are  
sworn to vows

Of utter hardness, utter gentleness,  
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from  
his knees,

'My King, for hardness I can promise  
thee

For uttermost obedience make demand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the merris and  
drinks'

And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
But love I shall, God willing'

And the King—  
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,  
but he,

Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
And one with me in all, he needs must  
know'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let  
Lancelot know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest'

And the King—  
'But wherefore would ye men should  
wonder at you?

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their  
King,

And the deed's sake my knighthood do  
the deed,

Than to be noised of'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,

'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking  
of it?

Let be my name until I make my name!  
My deeds will speak it is but for a day,  
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-  
ingly

Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to  
him

Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,  
'I have given him the first quest he is  
not proven

Look therefore when he calls for this in  
hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him faraway  
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor  
slun'

Then that same day there past into the  
hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,

Hawk-eyes, and lightly was her slender  
nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower,  
She into hall past with her page and cried,

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe  
without,

See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset  
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower  
The Lord for half a league Why sit ye  
there?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were  
king,

Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free  
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-  
cloth

From that best blood it is a sin to spill'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor  
mine

Rest so my knighthood keep the vows  
they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall  
be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall  
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said—

'Lynette my name, noble, my need, a  
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
And comely, yea, and comelier than my-  
self

She lives in Castle Perilous a river  
Runs in three loops about her living  
place,

And o'er it are three passings, and three  
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth

And of that four the mightiest, holds her  
stay'd

In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will, and make her wed with  
him

And but delays his purport till thou send  
To do the battle with him, thy chief man  
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,  
Then wed, with glory but she will not  
wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life  
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,  
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to  
crush

All wrongers of the Realm But say, these  
four,

Who be they? What the fashion of the  
men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
Who ride abroad and do but what they  
will,

Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
such

As have nor law nor king, and three of  
these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves the  
Day,

Morning Star, and Noon-Sun, and Even-  
ing-Star,

Being strong fools, and never a whit more  
wise

The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in  
black,

A huge man-beast of boundless savagery  
He names himself the Night and oftener  
Death,

And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,  
To show that who may slay or scape the  
three,

Slain by himself, shall enter endless night  
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,  
And therefore am I come for Lancelot'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he  
rose,

A head with kindling eyes above the  
throng,

'A boon, Sir King—this quest ' then—  
for he mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded  
bull—

'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-  
knaave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such  
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing  
at him,

Brought down a momentary brow  
'Rough, sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—  
Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed

But on the damsel's forehead shame,  
pride, wrath

Slew the May-white she lifted either arm,  
'Fie on thee, King ' I ask'd for thy chief  
knight,

And thou hast given me but a kitchen-  
knaave'

Then ere a man in hall could stay her,  
turn'd

Fled down the lane of access to the King,  
Took horse, descended the slope street,  
and past

The weird white gate, and paused without,  
beside

The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-  
'knaave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the  
hall,

At one end one, that gave upon a range

Of level pavement where the King would  
pace

At sunrise, grazing over plain and wood,  
And down from this a lordly stairway  
sloped

Till lost in blowing trees and tops of  
towers,

And out by this main doorway past the  
King

But one was counter to the hearth, and  
rose

High that the highest-crested helm could  
ride

Therethro' nor graze and by this entry  
fled

The damsel in her wrath, and on to this  
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the  
door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a  
town,

A warhorse of the best, and near it stood  
The two that out of north had follow'd  
him

This bare a maiden shield, a casque, that  
held

The horse, the spear, whereat Sir Gareth  
loosed

A cloak that dropt from collar bone to  
heel,

A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down  
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,  
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and  
flash'd as those

Dull-coated things, that making slid  
apart

Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath their  
burns

A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly  
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms  
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the  
shield

And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of  
grain

Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and  
tip

With trenchant steel, around him slowly  
prest

The people, while from out of kitchen came  
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had  
work'd

Lustier than any, and whom they could  
but love,  
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and  
cried,  
'God bless the King, and all his fellow-  
ship'  
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode  
Down the slope street, and past without  
the gate

So Gareth past with joy, but as the cur  
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his  
cause  
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being  
named,  
His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
To harry and hustle

'Bound upon a quest  
With horse and arms—the King hath past  
his time—  
My scullion knave! Thralls to your work  
again,  
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!  
Will there be dawn in West and eve in  
East?  
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like  
enow  
Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
youth  
So shook his wits they wander in his  
prime—  
Cried! How the villain lifted up his  
voice,  
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
knave  
Tut he was tame and meek enow with  
me,  
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing  
Well—I will after my loud knave, and  
learn  
Whether he know me for his master yet  
Out of the smoke he came, and so my  
lance  
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the  
mire—  
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,  
Into the smoke again'

But Lancelot said,  
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the  
King,  
For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
But ever meekly served the King in thee?  
Abide take counsel, for this lad is great  
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and  
sword'  
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are  
overfine  
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies'  
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
Down the slope city, and out beyond the  
gate

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the  
King  
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt,  
at least  
He might have yielded to me one of those  
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie  
upon him—  
His kitchen-knave'

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
(And there were none but few goodlier  
than he)  
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.  
Lead, and I follow' She thereat, as one  
That smells a foul-flesh'd aganic in the  
holt,  
And deems it carrion of some woodland  
thing,  
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose  
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,  
'Hence!  
Avoid, thou smelliest all of kitchen-grease  
And look who comes behind,' for there  
was Kay  
'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I  
am Kay  
We lack thee by the hearth'

And Gareth to him,  
'Master no more' too well I know thee,  
ay—  
The most ungente knight in Arthur's  
hall'



'Have at thee then,' said Kay they  
 shock'd, and Kay  
 Fell shoulder slipt, and Gareth cried again,  
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she  
 fled

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
 Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
 Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
 Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke

'What doest thou, scullion, in my  
 fellowship?  
 Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the  
 more  
 Or love thee better, that by some device  
 Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,  
 Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
 master—thou '—  
 Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon '—  
 to me  
 Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,  
 'say  
 Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,  
 I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
 Or die therefore'

'Ay, wilt 'hou finish it?  
 Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
 talks!  
 The listening rogue hath caught the man-  
 ner of it  
 But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,  
 knave,  
 And then by such a one that thou for all  
 The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
 Shalt not once dare to look him in the  
 face'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile  
 That madden'd her, and away she flash'd  
 again  
 Down the long avenues of a boundless  
 wood,  
 And Gareth following was again belnaved

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the  
 only way  
 Where Arthur's men are set along the  
 wood,

The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
 leaves

If both be slain, I am rid of thee, but yet,  
 Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of  
 thine?

Fight, an thou canst I have miss'd the  
 only way'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong  
 Rode on the two, reviler and reviled,  
 Then after one long slope was mounted,  
 saw,  
 Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand  
 pines

A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
 To westward—in the depths whereof a  
 mere,

Round as the red eye of an Eagle owl,  
 Under the half-dead sunset glared, and  
 shouts

Ascended, and there brake a servingman  
 Flying from out of the black wood, and  
 crying,

'They have bound my lord to cast him in  
 the mere'

Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the  
 wrong'd,

But straitlier bound am I to bide with  
 thee'

And when the damsel spake contempt  
 uously,

'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,  
 'Follow, I lead'' so down among the  
 pines

He plunged, and there, blackshadow'd  
 nigh the mere,

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and  
 reed,

Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,  
 A stone about his neck to drown him  
 in it

Three with good blows he quieted, but  
 three

Fled thro' the pines, and Gareth loosed  
 the stone

From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
 Tumbled it, oilyly bubbled up the mere.  
 Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free  
 feet

Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came or else these cattiff  
rogue—'

Had wikk'd themselves on me, good  
cruel is theirs

To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
To catch my thief, and then like vermin  
here

Drown him and with a stone about his  
neck.

And under this wan water many of them  
Lie rotting, but a night let go the stone,  
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have  
saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this  
wood

And fain would I reward thee worship  
fully

What guerdon will ye?

Gareth sharply spake,

None ' for the deed's sake have I done  
the deed

In uttermost obedience to the King  
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbour  
age?

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well  
believe

You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh  
Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,  
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen  
knave!—'

But deem not I accept thee right the  
more,

Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
Down on a rout of coven foresters  
A threshers with his flail had scatter'd them  
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen  
still

But an this lord will yield us harbourage,  
Well'

So she spake A league beyond the  
wood,

All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
His towers where that day a feast had  
been

Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
And many a costly cate, received the  
three

And there they placed a peacock in his  
pride

Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose

'Meseems, that here is much dis  
courtesy,

Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side  
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's  
hall,

And pray'd the King would grant me  
Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Dry and  
Night—

The last a monster unsubduable

Of any save of him for whom I call'd—  
Suddenly brows this frontless kitchen  
knave,

"The quest is mine, thy kitchen-knave  
am I,

And mighty thro' thy merits and drinks  
—m I"

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest  
to him—

Him—here—a villan fitter to stick swine  
Than ride abroad redressing women's  
wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed,  
the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left  
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
And, setting Gareth at another board,  
Sat down beside him, ate and then began

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-  
knave, or not,

Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,  
And whether she be mad, or else the  
King,

Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
I ask not but thou strikest a strong  
stroke,

For strong thou art and goodly there  
withal,

And saver of my life, and therefore now,  
For here be mighty men to joust with,  
weigh

Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel  
back  
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King  
Thy pardon, I but speak for thine avail,  
The saver of my life'

And Gareth sud,  
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death and  
Hell'

So when, next morn, the lord whose  
life he saved  
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on  
their way  
And left them with God speed, Sir Gareth  
spake,  
'Lead, and I follow' Haughtily she  
replied,

'I fly no more I allow thee for an  
hour  
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
In time of flood Nay, furthermore,  
methinks  
Some ruth is mine for thee Back wilt  
thou, fool?  
For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding  
me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-  
teously,  
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt  
find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's  
son'

Then to the shore of one of those long  
loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they  
came  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and  
steep, the stream  
Full, narrow, this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap, and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold

In streaks and rays, and all Lent lily in  
hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above,  
Crimson, a slender bannet fluttering  
And therefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this  
he,  
The champion thou hast brought from  
Arthur's hall?  
For whom we let thee pass' 'Nay, nay,'  
she said,  
'Sir Morning Star The King in utter  
scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee  
here  
His kitchen-knave and look thou to  
thyself.  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd he is not knight  
but knave'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the  
Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, ap-  
proach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair  
girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd, and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with  
gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave  
a shield  
Blue also, and thereon the morning star  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was  
brought,  
Glorying, and in the stream beneath him,  
shone  
Immingled with Heaven's azure waver-  
ingly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.  
Then she that watch'd him, 'Wherefore  
stare ye so?  
Thou shakest in thy fear there yet is  
time

Flee down the valley before he get to  
horse  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not  
knight but knave

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave  
or knight,  
Far nester had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and revile  
Fair words were best for him who fights  
for thee,  
But truly foul are better for they send  
That strength of anger thro mine arms,  
I know  
That I shall overthrow him

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, criel from o'er  
the bridge,  
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with  
scorn  
For this were shame to do him further  
wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his  
horse  
And arms, and so return him to the  
King  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,  
knave  
Avoid for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady'

'Dog, thou hest  
I spring from lofter harger than thine  
own'  
He spake, and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either  
spar  
Bent but not brake, and either knight at  
once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead, but quickly rose and  
drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his  
brand  
He drove his enemy backward down the  
bridge,  
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken,  
kitchen-knave!'

Till Gareth's shield was cloven, but one  
stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the  
ground

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my  
life I yield'  
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace'  
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion I of  
thee?  
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!  
'Then shall he die' And Gareth there  
unlaced  
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,  
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
One nobler than thyself' 'Damsel, thy  
charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me Knight,  
My life is thine at her command Arise  
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say  
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See  
thou crave  
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws  
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.  
Thy shield is mine—farewell, and,  
damsel, thou,  
Lead, and I follow'

And fast away she fled  
Then when he came upon her, spake,  
'Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on  
the bridge  
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me  
A little fainter but the wind hath  
changed  
I scent it twenty-fold' And then she sang,  
"O morning star" (not that tall felon there  
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven  
true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled  
on me"

'But thou begone, take counsel, and  
away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a  
ford—

The second brother in their fool's parable—  
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot  
Care not for shame thou art not knight  
but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-  
ingly,  
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.  
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest  
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my  
co mates  
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his  
coat,  
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle  
with it  
And such a coat art thou, and thee the  
King  
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight  
or knave—  
The knave that doth thee service as full  
knight  
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing'

'Ay, Sir Knave'  
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me  
the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet  
thy match'

So when they touch'd the second river-  
loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday  
Sun  
Beyond a raging shallow As if the flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrow-lets,  
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the  
fierce shield,  
All sun, and Gareth's eyes had flying  
blots  
Before them when he turn'd from watch-  
ing him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow  
roar'd,  
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches  
here?'

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,  
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's  
hall

Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath  
his arms'

'Ugh' cried the Sun, and vizoring up a  
red

And cipher face of rounded foolishness,  
Push'd horse across the foamings of the  
ford,

Whom Gareth met midstream no room  
was there

For lance or tourney skill four strokes  
they struck

With sword, and these were mighty, the  
new knight

Had fear he might be shamed, but as the  
Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the  
fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream,  
the stream

Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the  
ford,

So drew him home, but he that fought  
no more,

As being all bone batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the  
King

'Myself when I return will plead for thee'

'Lead, and I follow' Quietly she led  
'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed  
again?'

'Nay, not a point nor art thou victor  
here.

There lies a ridge of slate across the ford  
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I  
saw it

"O Sun" (not this strong fool whom  
thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),  
"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or  
pain,

O noon, that hyls all to sleep again  
Shares sweetly twice my love hath smiled  
on me.

'What knowest thou of love long or of  
love?'

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,

Thou hast a stately presence Yeperchance, -

'O dewy flowers that open to the  
sun

O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done,

Blow sweetly twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except,  
belike

To grasshoppers and to bees in our  
good king

Who lent me thee, the power of kitchen  
dore,

A foolish love for flowers? what stick we  
round

The pasty? where-withal deck the boy's  
head?

Flowers? nay, the boy hath rosemarys  
and bay

'O birds, that warble to the morning  
day,

O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly twice my love hath smiled  
on me

'What knowest thou of birds, mark,  
may, merle,

Lynnet? what dream ye when they utter  
forth

May-music growing with the growing  
light,

Their sweet sun worship? these be for the  
squire

(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting See thou have not  
now

Larded thy list, except thou turn and fly  
There stands the third fool of their  
allegory'

For there beyond a bridge of treble  
bow,

All in a rose red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad

Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight,

That named himself the Star of Evening,  
stood

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the  
madman there

Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she  
cried,

'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins  
That fit him like his own, and so ye cleave

His armour off him, these will turn the  
blade'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the  
bridge,

'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?  
Thy ward is higher up but have ye slun

The damsel's champion?' and the damsel  
cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's  
heaven

With all disaster unto thine and thee'  
I or both thy younger brethren have gone

down  
Before this youth, and so wilt thou, Sir  
Star,

Art thou not old?'  
Old, damsel, old and hard,

Old, with the might and breath of twenty  
boys'

Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in  
brag'

But that same strength which threw the  
Morning Star

Can throw the Evening'

Then that other blew  
A hard and deadly note upon the horn

'Approach and arm me!' With slow  
steps from out

An old storm beaten, russet, many stain'd  
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,

And arm'd him in old arms, and brought  
a helm

With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
And gave a shield whereon the Star of  
Even

Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his em-  
blem, shone

But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle bow,  
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;  
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted drew,  
There met him drawn, and overthrew him  
again,

But up like fire he started and as oft  
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his  
knees,

So many a time he vaulted up again,  
Till Gareth panted hard and his great  
heart,

Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one  
That all in later, sadder age begins

To war agunst ill uses of a life,  
But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not  
put us down!'

He half despairs, so Gareth seem'd to  
strike

Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the  
while,

'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken,  
O good knight-knave—

O knave, as noble as any of all the  
knights—

Shame me not, shame me not I have  
prophesied—

Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
Round—

His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd  
skin—

Strike—strike—the wind will never  
change again'

And Gareth hearing ever stronger smote,  
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off  
him,

But lash'd in vain against the harden'd  
skin,

And could not wholly bring him under,  
more

Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge  
on ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and  
springs

For ever, till at length Sir Gareth's brard  
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the  
hilt

'I have thee now,' but forth that other  
sprang,

And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry  
arms

Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost  
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the  
bridge

Down to the river, sink or swim, and  
cried,

'Lead, and I follow'

But the damsel said,

'I lead no longer, ride thou at my side,  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen  
knaves

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy  
plun,

O rainbow with three colours after rain,  
Shine sweetly thrice my love hath smiled  
on me"

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had  
adaed—Knight,

But that I heard thee call thyself a  
knave,—

Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee, noble I am; and thought  
the King

Scorn'd me and mine, and now thy  
pardon, friend,

For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek  
withal

As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
Hast mazed my wit I marvel what thou  
art

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to  
blame,

Saving that you mistrusted our good King  
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,  
one

Not fit to cope your quest You said  
your say,

Mine answer was my deed Good sooth!  
I hold

He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,  
 nor meet  
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heart  
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness  
 Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings  
 fought for me  
 And seeing now thy words are fair,  
 methinks  
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his  
 great self,  
 Hath force to quell me'

Nigh upon that hour  
 When the lone heron forgets his melancholy,  
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching,  
 dreams  
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at  
 him,  
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
 Where bread and baken meats and good  
 red wine  
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
 Had sent her coming champion, waited  
 him

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights  
 on horse  
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly waning  
 hues.  
 'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once  
 was here,  
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the  
 rock  
 The war of Time against the soul of man  
 And yon four fools have suck'd their alle  
 gory  
 From these damp walls, and taken but  
 the form  
 Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt  
 and read—  
 In letters like to those the vexillary  
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming  
 Gelt—  
 'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—  
 'HESPERUS'—  
 NOX—'MORS,' beneath five figures,  
 armed men,

Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
 And running down the Soul, a Shape that  
 fled  
 With broken wings, torn raiment and  
 loose hair,  
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave  
 'Follow the faces, and we find it Look,  
 Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first  
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter  
 chanced,  
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the  
 wood—  
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-  
 loops—  
 His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the  
 star  
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,  
 cried,  
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my  
 friend'  
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry,  
 But when they closed—in a moment—in  
 one touch  
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the  
 world—  
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
 That when he found the grass within his  
 hands  
 He laugh'd, the laughter jarr'd upon  
 Lynette  
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and  
 overthrown,  
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast  
 in vain?'  
 'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-  
 cent,  
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by  
 whom  
 I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—  
 Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
 Out, sword, we are thrown!' And  
 Lancelot answer'd, 'Prince,  
 O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness



Of one who came to help thee, not to  
harm,  
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee  
whole  
As on the day when Arthur knighted him'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot'—  
thine the hand  
That threw me? An some chance to mar  
the boast  
Thy brethren of thee make—which could  
not chance—  
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,  
Shamed had I been, and said—O Lancelot  
—thou'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lance-  
lot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and  
wherefore now  
Come ye, not call'd? I glori'd in my  
knaue,  
Who being still rebuked, would answer  
still  
Courteous as any knight—but now, if  
knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd  
and trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd  
upon  
And doubtful whether I and mine be  
scorn'd  
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's  
hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,  
prince and fool,  
I hate thee and for ever'

And Lancelot said,  
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth' knight  
art thou  
To the King's best wish O damsel, be  
you wise  
To call him shamed, who is but over-  
thrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many  
a time  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
And overthrower from being overthrown  
With sword we have not striven, and  
thy good horse

And thou are weary, yet not less I felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance  
of thine  
Well hast thou done, for all the stream  
is freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his  
foes,  
And when reviled, hast answer'd grac-  
iously,  
And mak'st merry when overthrow  
Prince, Knight,  
Hall, Knight and Prince, and of our  
Table Round'

And then when turning to Lynette he  
told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said  
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than being  
fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self A cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and  
drinks  
And forge for the horse, and flint for fire  
But all about it flies a honeysuckle  
Seek, till ye find' And when they  
sought and found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
Past into sleep, on whom the maiden  
gazed  
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to  
sleep hast thou  
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to  
him  
As my mother? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her child,  
And vex his day, but blesses him asleep--  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the  
honeysuckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world were  
one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness'  
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clasp'd  
her hands—  
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave  
Is I might and noble See now, sworn  
have I  
Else yon black felon had not let me pass  
To bring thee back to do the battle with  
him  
Thus an thou goest he will fight thee first

Who has thee victor as with my  
In the brave  
Now the full power of the accomplish  
men

Said Lancelot 'Perdition be to  
him,  
Me, I am my shield Let Gareth, on  
his

'Charge him, and take my charger,  
for  
No to be injured, loving the battle as  
well

As he that is his 'Lancelot' like,  
the same,

'Gareth is in this, Lord Lancelot, as in  
it'

And Gareth, taking Lancelot's shield  
the shield,

'But, Gareth, with tenfold on thou  
all men

We must take 'ye men come to rest'  
Yet, ramp and so at leaving of your  
hills—

Care not, good Lancelot, as well I care for  
ye

O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
Streams above—the thro' one that will  
not shame

Lancelot's shield of Lancelot in her shield  
Hence let us go'

Silent the silent field  
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'  
summer ran,

In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
The prince of Gareth dreaming on his  
hinge

A star shot 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe  
falls!'

And so whoops 'Mark the victor pal-  
ing there!'

Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent  
him, crying,

'Yield, yield him this again 'tis he must  
fight'

I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday  
Reiled thee, and hath wrought on  
Lancelot now

To lend thee horse and shield wonders  
we have done,  
Miracles ye cannot here is glory now  
In having slung the three I see thee  
maim'd,  
Mingled I swear thou canst not fling  
the fourth'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all  
ye know

You cannot scare me, nor rough face, or  
voice,

Fine bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
Appal me from the quest'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,  
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
Seeing he never rides abroad by day,  
But watch'd him have I like a phantom  
pass

Chilling the night nor have I heard the  
voice

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported  
him

As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad and girl—yet, the soft  
babe!

Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant  
flesh,

Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot  
first,

The quest is Lancelot's give him back  
the shield'

Said Gareth laughing 'An he fight for  
this,

Relike he wins it as the better man  
This—and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged  
All the oevings of their chivalry  
When one might meet a mightier than  
himself,

How best to manage horse, lance, sword  
and shield,

And so fill up the gap where force might  
fail

With skill and fineness Instant were  
his words

I hen Gareth, 'Here be rules I know  
but one—

To dash against mine enemy and to win  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the  
joust,  
And seen thy way 'Heaven help thee,'  
sigh'd Lynette

Then for a space, and under cloud that  
grew  
To thunder gloom piling all stars, they  
rode

In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,  
'There'

And all the three were silent seeing,  
pitch'd

Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
marge,

Black, with black banner, and a long  
black horn

Beside it hanging, which Sir Gareth  
graspt,

And so, before the two could hinder him,  
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the  
horn

Echo'd the walls, a light twinkled, anon  
Came lights and lights, and once again  
he blew,

Whereon were hollow trappings up and  
down

And muffled voices heard, and shadows  
past,

Till high above him, circled with her  
maids,

The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
White hands, and courtesy, but when  
the Prince

Three times had blown—after long hush  
—at last—

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
Thro' those black foldings, that which  
housed therein

High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack  
arms,

With white breast-bone, and barren ribs  
of Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter—  
some ten steps—

In the half light—thro' the dim dawn—  
advanced

The monster, and then paused, and spake  
no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,  
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength  
of ten,

Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God  
hath given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
Trick thyself out in ghastly imagenes  
Of that which Life hath done with, and  
the clod,

I ess dull than thou, will hide with  
mantling flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word,  
Which set the horror higher a maiden  
swoon'd,

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and  
wept,

As doom'd to be the bride of Night and  
Death,

Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
helm,

And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
blood felt

Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were  
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely  
neigh'd,

And Death's dark war-horse bounded  
forward with him

Then those that did not blink the terror,  
saw

That Death was cast to ground, and  
slowly rose

But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the  
skull

Half fell to right and half to left and lay  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the  
helm

As throughly as the skull, and out from  
this

Issued the bright face of a blooming boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,  
'Knight,

Slay me not my three brethren bid me  
do it,  
To make a horror all about the house,  
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors  
They never dream'd the passes would be  
past.'

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair  
child,

What madness made thee challenge the  
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bad  
me do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the  
King's friend,

They hoped to slay him somewhere on  
the stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be  
past'

Then sprang the happier day from  
underground,

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with  
dance

And revel and song, made merry over  
Death,

As being after all their foolish fears  
And horrors only proven a blooming boy

So large mirth lived and Gareth won the  
quest

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he, that told it later, says Lynette

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's  
court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of  
Heaven

And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved  
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day.

In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's  
eye,

Who first had found and loved her in a  
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendour, and the Queen  
herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service  
done,

Loved her, and often with her own white  
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true  
heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth  
And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced  
Geraint.

But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet  
was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into  
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it, and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his princedom  
lay

Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and cattiff  
knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law  
And therefore, till the King himself  
should please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his  
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches, and the  
King

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own  
land,

Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the alt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his princedom and its cares  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all  
gone,

And molten down in mere uxoriousness  
And thus she gather'd from the people's  
eyes

This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless  
love,

Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
more

And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy,  
While he that watch'd her sadden, was  
the more

Suspicious that her nature had a taint

At last, it chanced that on a summer  
morn

(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the  
room,

And heated the strong warrior in his  
dreams,

Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his  
throat,

The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle  
sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,

Was ever man so grandly made as he?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk,

And accusation of uxoriousness

Acro's her mind, and hovering over her,  
Low to her own heart piteously, she said

'O noble breast and all puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Renouch you, saying, all your force is  
gone?

I am the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they  
say

And yet I hate that he should linger here.  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
For he has had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mighty hand striking  
great blows

at evil-doers and at wrongers of the world  
Far better were I hid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his  
eyes,

Than that my lord thro' me should suffer  
shame

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine  
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy?

O me, I fear that I am no true wife'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her  
weep

True tears upon his broad and naked  
breast,

And these awoke him, and by great mis-  
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife  
And then he thought, 'In spite of all my  
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my  
pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's  
hall'



Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the King's hall, desired his name, and  
sent

Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf,  
Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not  
know

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said  
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried  
the dwarf,

'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of  
him,'

And when she put her horse toward the  
knight,

Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd

Indignant to the Queen, whereat Geraint  
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it  
of him,

Who answer'd as before, and when the  
Prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the  
knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his  
cheek

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it, and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,  
refrain'd

From ev'n a word, and so returning said

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself  
And I will track this vermin to their  
earths

For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at,  
arms

On loan, or else for pledge, and, being  
found,

Then will I fight him, and will break his  
pride,

And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the  
stately Queen

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all,  
And may you light on all things that you  
love,

And live to wed with her whom first you  
love

But ere you wed with any, bring your  
bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a  
king,

Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the  
hedge,

Will clothe her for her bridal like the  
sun'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that  
he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vex'd at losing of the hunt,

A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy

glade  
And valley, with first eye following the

three  
At last they issued from the world of

wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky,

and sank  
And thither came Geraint, and under-

neath  
Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,

White from the mason's hand, a fortress  
rose,

And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry

ravine  
And out of town and valley came a noise

As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks

At distance, ere they settle for the night

And onward to the fortress rode the  
three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
walls

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd  
him to his earth'

And down the long street riding wearily  
 Found every level fell, and every where  
 Was broken and to loof, and the lot  
 Was

And bustling whistle of the youth who  
 scold

His master's armour, and of such a one  
 He said 'What mean'st thou, the tumult in  
 the town?

Who would him scorn? 'All, 'The  
 sparrow hawk'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
 Who, smitten by the day's sloping beam,  
 Went sweating up his ear with sick of corn  
 Ask'd yet once more what mean'st the  
 tumult in the town?

Who answer'd gravely, 'Ugh! the sparrow  
 hawk'

Then riding far'er yet an armourer's,  
 Who, with broad sword, and bow'd above  
 his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee  
 He put the self-same query, but the man  
 Not turning round, nor looking at him,  
 said

'Friend, be that looks for the sparrow  
 hawk'

Has little time for idle questioners'  
 Whereat Gerant dash'd into sudden  
 spleen

'A thousand pip eat up your sparrow-  
 hawk'

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck  
 him dead'

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
 The murmur of the world! What is it  
 to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
 Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-  
 hawks'

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-  
 mad,

Where can I get me harbourage for the  
 night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?  
 Speak'

Whereat the armourer turning all amazed  
 And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
 Came forward with the helmet yet in  
 hand

And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger  
 I might,

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
 And there is scanty time for half the work  
 Arms? truth! I know not all are  
 wanted here

Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know  
 not, save,

It may be at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
 Yonder' He spoke and fell to work  
 again

Then rode Gerant, a little spleenful yet,  
 Across the bridge that spann'd the dry  
 ravine

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
 (His dress a suit of fry'd magnificence,  
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and  
 said

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Gerant  
 replied,

'O friend, I seek a harbourage for the  
 night'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
 The slender entertainment of a house  
 Once rich, now poor, but ever open-  
 doord'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied  
 Gerant,

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-  
 hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
 With all the passion of a twelve hours'  
 fast'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed  
 Earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours  
 is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow  
 hawk

But in, go in, for save yourself desire it,  
 We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest'

Then rode Gerant into the castle court,  
 His charger trampling many a prickly  
 star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones  
 He look'd and saw that all was runous  
 Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed  
 with fern,



And here had fall'n a great part of a  
tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the  
cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding  
flowers  
And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred  
arms,  
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and  
look'd  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
Singing, and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form,  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint,  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green  
and red,

And he suspends his converse with a  
friend,  
Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, 'There is the nightingale,'  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought  
and said,  
'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice  
for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang  
was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid  
sang

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and  
lower the proud,  
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine,  
storm, and cloud,  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with  
smile or frown,  
With that wild wheel we go not up or  
down,  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many  
lands,  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our  
own hands,  
For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring  
crowd,  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
cloud,  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn  
the nest,'  
Said Yniol, 'enter quickly' Entering  
then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim bro-  
cade,

And near her, like a blossom vermeil  
white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter In a moment thought  
Geraint,

'Here by God's rood is the one maid for  
me'  
But none spake word except the hoary  
Earl

'Enid, the good knight's horse stands in  
the court,  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and  
then

Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
wine,  
And we will make us merry as we may  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great'

He spake the Prince, as Enid past  
him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught

His purple scarf and held, and sud,  
'Forbear'

Rest ' the good house, tno' run'd O my  
son,

Endures not that her guest should serve  
himself'

And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore

So Enid took his charger to the stall,  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and  
wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
them cheer,

And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread  
And then, because their hall must also  
serve

For kitchen, boild the flesh, and spread  
the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the  
three

And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it  
down

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall;

Then suddenly address the hoary Earl

'Fair Host and Earl, I pray your  
courtesy;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me  
of him

His name? but no, good faith, I will not  
have it

For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason's hand, then have  
I sworn

From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint

Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she re-  
turn'd

Indignant to the Queen, and then I swore  
That I would track this catfist to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have  
it of him

And all unarmed I rode, and thought to  
find

arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad,

They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round the  
world,

They would not hear me speak—but if  
ye know

Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have  
sworn

That I will break his pride and learn his  
name,

Avenge this great insult done the  
Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol, 'Art thou he  
indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your  
state

And presence might have guess'd you one  
of those

That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery,  
For this dear child hath often heard me  
praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused

Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds

To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden, first Lirours.

A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
 Drunk even when he woo'd, and be he dead  
 I know not, but he past to the wild land  
 The second was your foe, the sparrow hawk,  
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name  
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
 When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
 Refused her to him, then his pride awoke,  
 And since the proud man often is the mean,  
 He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
 Affirming that his father left him gold,  
 And in my charge, which was not render'd to him,  
 Bribed with large promises the men who served  
 About my person, the more easily  
 Because my means were somewhat broken into  
 Thro' open doors and hospitality,  
 Raised my own town against me in the night  
 Before my Emid's birthday, sack'd my house,  
 From mine own earldom foully ousted me,  
 Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
 For truly there are those who love me yet,  
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
 Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,  
 But that his pride too much despises me  
 And I myself sometimes despise myself,  
 For I have let men be, and have their way,  
 Am much too gentle, have not used my power  
 Nor know I whether I be very base  
 Or very manful, whether very wise  
 Or very foolish, only this I know,  
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
 But can endure it all most patiently'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint,  
 'but arms,  
 That if the sparrow hawk, this nephew,  
 fight  
 In next day's tourney I may break his pride'  
 And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, indeed,  
 but old  
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
 Are mine, and therefore at thine asking,  
 thine  
 But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
 Except the lady he loves best be there  
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
 ground,  
 And over these is placed a silver wand,  
 And over that a golden sparrow hawk,  
 The prize of beauty for the fairest there  
 And this, what knight soever be in field  
 Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
 And tilts with my good nephew there  
 upon,  
 Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
 Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
 And toppling over all antagonism  
 Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow  
 hawk  
 But thou, that hast no lady, canst not  
 fight

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright  
 replied,  
 Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy leave!  
 Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
 For this dear child, because I never saw,  
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
 Nor can see elsewhere, any thing so fair  
 And if I fall her name will yet remain  
 Untarnish'd as before, but if I live,  
 So aid me Heaven when at mine utter  
 most,  
 As I will make her truly my true wife'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better days  
 And looking round he saw not Emid there,  
 (Who hearing her own name had stol'n  
 away)  
 But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
 And fondling all her hand in his he said,

'Mother, a mother is a tender thing,  
And best by her that love her understood  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the  
Prince.'

So spake the kindly hearted Earl and  
he  
With frequent smile and nod departing  
foward,

Hell's currying'd to her rest the girl,  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,  
and then

On either shining shoulder lay a hand,  
And lent her eye and gazed upon her face,  
And to'd her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart: but never light and  
blithe

Coursed one another nigh on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven than red and  
pale

Across the face of Laid hearing her,  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle  
breast,

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it,  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fall'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness  
And when the pale and bloodless east  
began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they  
moved

Down to the meadow where the jousts  
were held.

And waited there for Yniol and Geraint

And thither came the twain, and when  
Geraint

Beheld her first in field awaiting him,  
He felt, and ere she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move

The cheer of Idris Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these

Princelike his bearing shone, and errant  
knights

And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists  
And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,

And over these they placed the silver wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
blown,

Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,

'Advance and take, as fairest of the fair,  
What I these two years past have won  
for thee,

The prize of beauty' Loudly spake the  
Prince,

'Forbear there is a worthier,' and the  
knight

With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his  
face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at  
Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more, and  
thrice

They clash'd together, and thrice they  
brake their spears

Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd  
at each

So often and with such blows, that all the  
crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from distant  
walls

There came a clapping as of phantom  
hands

So twice they fought, and twice they  
breathed, and still

The dew of their great labour, and the  
blood

Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
their force

But either's force was match'd till Yniol's  
cry,

'Remember that great insult done the  
Queen,'

Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade  
aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the  
bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
breast,  
And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the  
fallen man  
Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of  
Nudd'

Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee  
My pride is broken men have seen my  
fall'

'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied  
Gerunt,

'These two things shalt thou do or else  
thou diest

First, thou thyself, with damsel and with  
dwarf,

Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming  
there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the  
Queen,

And shalt abide her judgment on it, next,  
Thou shalt give back thine earldom to thy  
kin

These two things shalt thou do, or thou  
shalt die'

And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will  
I do,

For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall'

And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
And there the Queen forgave him easily

And being young, he changed and came  
to loathe

His crime of trutor, slowly drew himself  
Bright from his old dark life, and fell at  
last

In the great battle fighting for the King

But when the third day from the  
hunting-morn

Made a low splendour in the world, and  
wings

Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
With her fair head in the dim yellow light,

Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
Woke and bethought her of her promise  
given

No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
So went he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise  
gave—

To ride with him this morning to the  
court,  
And there be made known to the stately  
Queen,  
And there be wedded with all ceremony  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so  
mean

For as a leaf in mid November is  
To what it was in mid October, seem'd  
The dress that now she look'd on to the  
dress  
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror  
grew  
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,  
a court,  
All staring at her in her faded silk  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said

'This noble prince who won our  
earldom back,  
So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit  
him'

Would he could tarry with us here awhile,  
But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,  
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favour at his hands.  
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger  
lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a  
costly gift  
Of her good mother, given her on the  
night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sick'd  
their house,  
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds  
For while the mother show'd it, and the  
two

Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they  
fled

With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought  
them bread

And Edyrn's men had caught them in  
their flight,

And placed them in this ruin, and she  
wish'd

The Prince had found her in her ancient  
home,

Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she  
knew,

And last bethought her how she used to  
watch,

Near that old home, a pool of golden carp,  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
lustreless

Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool,  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again,  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool,  
But this was in the garden of a king,  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she  
knew

That all was bright, that all about were  
birds

Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work,  
That all the turf was rich in plots that  
look'd

Each like a garnet or a turkis in it,  
And lords and ladies of the high court  
went

In silver tissue talking things of state,  
And children of the King in cloth of  
gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down  
the walks,

And while she thought 'They will not  
see me,' came

A stately queen whose name was  
Guinevere,

And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at  
all

Let them be gold, and charge the  
gardeners now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die'  
And therewithal one came and seized on  
her

And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
And lo! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake, and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly

'See here, my child, how fresh the  
colours look,

How fast they hold like colours of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the  
wave.

Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know  
it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at  
first,

Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
dream

Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it, your  
good gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night,  
Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,' said  
the dame,

'And gladly given again this happy morn  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every  
where

He found the sack and plunder of our  
house

All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town,  
And gave command that all which once  
was ours

Should now be ours again and yester-eve,  
While ye were talking sweetly with your  
Prince,

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?

For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
yours,

And howsoever patient, Yniol his  
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and  
seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
and all

That appertains to noble maintenance  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house,  
But since our fortune swerved from sun to  
shade,

And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
come,

So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride  
For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old  
And should some great court-lady say, the  
Prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the  
hedge,

And like a madman brought her to the  
court,

Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might  
shame the Prince

To whom we are beholden, but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
That neither court nor country, tho' they  
sought

Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
match'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of  
breath,

And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay,  
Then, as the white and glittering star of  
morn

Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed  
herself,

Help'd by the mother's careful hand and  
eye,

Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown,  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
and sud,

She never yet had seen her half so fair,  
And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of  
flowers,

And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar  
first

Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him back,  
As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
with joy

And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and  
wild,

But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the  
gay'

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
Geraint

Woke where he slept in the high hall, and  
call'd

For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
He answer'd 'Earl, entreat her by my  
love,

Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk'  
Yniol with that hard message went, it fell  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn  
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's  
face,

But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd  
gift,

And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus  
attired,

And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
As careful robs eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.

But rested with her sweet face satisfied,  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly  
said,

'O my new mother, be not wroth or  
grieved  
At thy new son, for my petition to her  
When late I left Caerleon, our great  
Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so  
sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I  
brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in  
Heaven  
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I wou'd that could I gain her, our fair  
Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your Enid  
burst  
Unlike from cloud—and likewise thought  
perhaps,  
That service done so graciously would  
bind  
The two together; fain I would the two  
should love each other how can Enid  
find  
A nobler friend? Another thought was  
mine,  
came among you here so suddenly,  
that tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
might well have served for proof that I  
was loved,  
doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
her easy nature, might not let itself  
be moulded by your wishes for her weal,  
or whether some false sense in her own  
self  
of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall,  
and such a sense might make her long  
for court  
and all its perilous glories and I  
thought,  
that could I somehow prove such force  
in her  
unk'd with such love for me, that at a  
word

(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer, or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted usage, then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and  
flows,

First on her faith Now, therefore, I do  
rest,

A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us Grant me pardon for my  
thoughts

And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your  
costly gift

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on  
her knees,

Who knows? another gift of the high  
God,

Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to kiss  
you thanks'

He spoke the mother smiled, but half  
in tears,

Then brought a mantle down and wrapt  
her in it,

And clapt and kiss'd her, and they rode  
away

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had  
climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high crest,  
they say,

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea,  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale  
of Usk,

By the first meadow, till she saw them  
come,

And then descending met them at the  
gates,

Embraced her with all welcome as a  
friend,

And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the  
sun,

And all that week was old Caerleon gay,



For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
saint,  
They twain were wedded with all cere  
mony

And this was on the last year's Whit  
suntide

But Enid e'er kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court

And now this morning when he sud  
to her,  
Put on your worst and meanest dress,  
she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein

### GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLING race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true,  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and  
reach

That other, where we see as we are seen

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing  
forth

That morning, when they both had got  
to horse,

Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his  
heart,

Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
perforce

Upon a head so dear in thunder, sud.

'Not at my side I charge thee ride  
before,

E'er a good way on before, and this  
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast,  
And forth they rode, but scarce three  
paces on,

When crying out, 'Esterminate as I am,  
I will not light my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron,' he loosed a mighty  
purse,

Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward  
the squirrel

So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
strown

With gold and scattered coinage, and the  
squire

Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again  
'To the wilds!' and Enid landing down  
the tracks

Thro' which he had her lead him on,  
they past

The marches, and by brandit-haunted  
holds,

Gray swamps and pools, waste places of  
the fern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
rode

Round was their price at first, but slacken'd  
soon

A stranger meeting them had surely  
thought

They rode so slowly and they looked so  
pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,

'O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances

To dress her beautifully and keep her  
true'—

And there he broke the sentence in his  
heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters  
him.

And she was ever praying the sweet  
heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any  
wound

And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so  
cold,

Till the great plover's human whistle  
amazed

Her heart, and glancing round the waste  
she fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambuscade  
Then thought again, 'If there be such in  
me,

I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it'

But when the fourth part of the day  
was gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a  
rock

In shadow, waiting for them, catiffs all,  
And heard one crying to his fellow,  
'Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down his  
head,

Who seems no bolder than a beaten  
hound,

Come, we will slay him and will have his  
horse

And armour, and his damsel shall be  
ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and  
said

'I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their catiff talk,  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or  
shame'

Then she went back some paces of  
return,

Met his full frown timidly firm, and said,  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
rock

Waiting to fall on you, and heard them  
boast

That they would slay you, and possess  
your horse

And armour, and your damsel should be  
theirs'

He made a wrathful answer 'Did I  
wish

Your warning or your silence? one com-  
mand

I laid upon you, not to speak to me,

And thus ye keep it! Well then, look  
—for now,

Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three

And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint

Drove the long spear a cubit thro' his  
breast

And out beyond, and then against his  
brace

Of comrades, each of whom had broken  
on him

A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd  
the twain

Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying  
him,

Stript from the three dead wolves of  
woman born

The three gay suits of armour which they  
wore,

And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them  
on

Before you,' and she drove them thro'  
the waste

He follow'd nearer ruth began to  
work

Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience

Driving them on he fain had spoken to  
her,

And loosed in words of sudden fire the  
wrath

And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all  
within,

But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her  
dead,

Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own  
bright face

Accuse her of the least immodesty  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth  
the more

That she *could* speak whom his own ear  
had heard

Call herself false and suffering thus he  
made

Minutes an age but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to full seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
arm'd,

Whereof one seem'd far larger than her  
lord,

And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a  
prize'

Three horses and three goodly suits of  
arms,

And all in charge of whom? a girl set on?  
'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a  
knight'

The third, 'A craven, how he hangs his  
head'

The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but one?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon  
him'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and  
said,

'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares  
I needs must disobey him for his good,  
How should I dare obey him to his harm?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me  
for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine'

And she abode his coming, and said to  
him

With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to  
speak?'

He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she  
spoke.

'There lurk three villains yonder in the  
wood,  
And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
That they will fall upon you while ye  
pass'

To which he flung a wrathful answer  
back

'And if there were an hundred in the  
wood,

And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only  
breathe

Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a  
breath

And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
upon him

Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd, but  
Geraint's,

A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet  
home,

And then brake short, and down his  
enemy roll'd,

And there lay still, as he that tells the  
tale

Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls  
to the beach,

And there he still, and yet the sapling  
grew

So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
Of comrades making slower at the  
Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark fallen,  
stood,

On whom the victor, to confound them  
more,

Spurr'd with his terrible war cry, for as  
one,

That listens near a torrent mountain  
brook,

All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
At distance, were 'he soldiers wont to  
hear

His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like thrt false pair  
who turn'd

Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an  
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd  
the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from  
those dead wolves

Their three gay suits of armour, each from  
each,

And bound them on their horses, each on  
each,

And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you,' and she drove them thro' the  
wood

He follow'd nearer still the pain she  
had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the  
wood,

Two sets of three laden with jingling  
arms,

Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her  
heart

And they themselves, like creatures gently  
born

But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender government

So thro' the green gloom of the wood  
they past,

And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike  
chrsed

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing  
in it

And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in  
his hand

Bare victual for the mowers and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale  
Then, moving downward to the meadow  
ground,

He, when the fair hair'd youth came by  
him, said,

'Friend, let her eat, the damsel is so  
faint'

'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth, 'and  
thou,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers,' then set  
down

His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate them-  
selves

And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure, but  
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was  
amazed,

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,  
but take

A horse and arms for guerdon, choose  
the best'

He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold'  
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried the  
Prince.

'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
'Not guerdon, for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
Earl,

For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his, and I will tell  
him

How great a man thou art he loves to  
know

When men of mark are in his territory  
And he will have thee to his palace here,  
And serve thee costlier than with mowers'  
fare'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no better  
fare

I never ate with angrier appetite

Than when I left your mowers dinnerless  
And into no Earl's palace will I go  
I know, God knows, too much of  
palaces!

And if he want me, let him come to me  
But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,  
And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us  
know'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad  
youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought himself  
a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left  
alone

But when the Prince had brought his  
errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance  
At Enid, where she droopt his own  
false doom,  
That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd,  
Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning  
scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamour of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the  
grass

There growing longest by the meadow's  
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage  
ring,

Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they  
went,

Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,  
Call for the woman of the house,' to which  
She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord,' the  
two remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
mute  
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of  
birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield

On a sudden, many a voice along the  
street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing,  
burst

Their drowse, and either started while  
the door,  
Push'd from without, drove backward to  
the wall,

And midstmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale.  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
Limours

He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and grasp'd  
hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly  
cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously

According to his fashion, bade the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honour of their  
Earl,

'And care not for the cost, the cost is  
mine'

And wine and food were brought, and  
Earl Limours

Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd  
upon it,

And made it of two colours, for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled  
him,

Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets, thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.

Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd  
 Limours,  
 'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,  
 and speak  
 To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,'  
 he said,  
 'Get her to speak she doth not speak to  
 me'  
 Then rose Limours, and looking at his  
 feet,  
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears  
 may fail,  
 Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-  
 ingly

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
 Enid, my early and my only love,  
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me  
 wild—  
 What chance is this? how is it I see you  
 here?  
 Ye are in my power at last, are in my  
 power  
 Yet fear me not I call mine own self  
 wild,  
 But keep a touch of sweet civility  
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness  
 I thought, but that your father came  
 between,  
 In former days you saw me favourably  
 And if it were so do not keep it back  
 Make me a little happier let me know it  
 Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?  
 Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you  
 owe  
 And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,  
 Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
 You come with no attendance, page or  
 maid,  
 To serve you—doth he love you as of old?  
 For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
 Tho' men may bicker with the things they  
 love,  
 They would not make them laughable in  
 all eyes,  
 Not while they loved them, and your  
 wretched dress,  
 A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks

Your story, that this man loves you no  
 more  
 Your beauty is no beauty to him now  
 A common chance—right well I know it  
 —pall'd—  
 For I know men nor will ye win him  
 back,  
 For the man's love once gone never  
 returns  
 But here is one who loves you as of old,  
 With more exceeding passion than of old  
 Good, speak the word my followers ring  
 him round  
 He sits unarm'd, I hold a finger up,  
 They understand nay, I do not mean  
 blood  
 Nor need ye look so scared at what I say  
 My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
 No stronger than a wall there is the  
 keep,  
 He shall not cross us more, speak but  
 the word  
 Or speak it not, but then by Him that  
 made me  
 The one true lover whom you ever own'd,  
 I will make use of all the power I have  
 O pardon me! the madness of that hour,  
 When first I parted from thee, moves me  
 yet'

At this the tender sound of his own  
 voice  
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
 Made his eye moist, but Enid fear'd his  
 eyes,  
 Moist as they were, wine-heated from the  
 feast,  
 And answer'd with such craft as women  
 use,  
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
 That breaks upon them perilously, and  
 sud

'Earl, if you love me as in former  
 years,  
 And do not practise on me, come with  
 morn,  
 And scratch me from him as by violence,  
 Leave me to night I am weary of this  
 death'

Low at leave taking, with his brandish'd  
plume  
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-  
amorous Earl,  
And the stout Prince had him a loud  
good night  
He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg shell for her lord

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while  
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly  
pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,  
hep'd

The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there agunst a sudden need,  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoild  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and  
then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke,

Then thought she heard the wild Earl at  
the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning  
her,

Which was the red cock shouting to the  
light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world,

And glimmer'd on his armour in the room  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares jangling, the  
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her  
Then breaking his command of silence  
given,

She told him all that Earl Lymours had  
said,

Except the passage that he loved her not,

Nor left untold the craft herself had used;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought 'was it for him she  
wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good  
fellows fools

And traitors Call the host and bid him  
bring

Charger and palfrey' So she guided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the  
house,

And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and  
return'd

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all  
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and  
cried,

'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he  
learnt it, 'Take

Five horses and their armours,' and the  
host

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth  
of one!'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the  
Prince,

And then to Enid, 'Forward' and to-  
day

I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that ye speak not but  
obey'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord,  
I know

Your wish, and would obey, but riding  
first,

I hear the violent threats you do not  
hear,

I see the danger which you cannot see  
Then not to give you warning, that seems  
hard,

Almost beyond me yet I would obey'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it be not too wise,  
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not all mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams'

With that he turn'd and look'd as  
leeny at her  
As careful robins eye the deliver's toil,  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten  
broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd  
the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower on  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw  
him ride

More near by many a rood than yester-  
morn,

It wellnigh made her cheerful, till  
Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should  
say

'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart  
again

But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping  
hoof

Smote on her ear, and turning round she  
saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,

And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust

At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,

Was in a manner pleased, and turning,  
stood

And in the moment after, wild Limours,

Borne on a black horse, like a thunder  
cloud

Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking  
storm,

Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him,  
and bore

Down by the length of lance and arm  
beyond

The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or  
dead,

And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind

But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn

Adown the crystal dyles at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the  
sand,

But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin

Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower,  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,

And left him lying in the public way,  
So vanish friendships only made in wine

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
Geraint,

Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,  
Mixt with the flyers 'Horse and man,'

he said,

'All of one mind and all right-honest  
friends!

Not a hoof left and I methinks till now  
Was honest—paid with horses and with  
arms,

I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg  
And so what say ye, shall we strip him  
there

Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armour? shall we fast, or  
dine?

No?—then do thou, being right honest,  
pray

That we may meet the horsemen of Earl  
Doorm,



I too would still be honest ' Thus he  
said  
And sadly gazing on her bridle reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the  
way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So puns him that he sickens nigh to  
death,

Sofared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
In combat with the follower of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darkend and his helmet  
wagg'd,

And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
The Prince, without a word, from his  
horse fell

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his  
arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blistering  
sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
dear lord's life

Then after all was done that hand could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the way

And many past, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Wascared as much for as a summer shower  
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him  
Another hurrying past, a man at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl,  
Half whistling and half singing a coarse  
song,

He drove the dust against her veilles eyes  
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever fancied arrow, made

The long way smoke beneath him in his  
flar,  
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
heel,  
And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
While the great charger stood, grieved  
like a man

But at the point of noon the huge Earl  
Doorm,  
Broad faced with under-fringe of russet  
beard,  
Bound on a fory, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up,  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, ' What, is he  
dead ?'

' No, no, not dead !' she answer'd in all  
haste.

' Would some of your kind people take  
him up,  
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead

Then said Earl Doorm ' Well, if he  
be not dead,

Why wul ye for him thus? ye seem a child  
And be he dead, I count you for a fool  
Your wuling will not quicken him dead  
or not,

Ye mur a comely face with idiot tears  
Yet, since the face is comely—some of you,  
Here, take him up, and bear him to our  
hall.

And if he live, we will have him of our  
band;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one'

He spake, and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who  
advanced,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good  
bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling so the ruffians  
growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,

Their chance of booty from the morning's  
raid,

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded, laid  
him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,  
(His gentle charger following him unled)  
And cast him and the bier in which he  
lay

Down on an orken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as  
before,

And cursing their lost amc, and the dead  
man,

And their own Earl, and their own souls,  
and her

They might as well have blest her she  
was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his  
head,

And chafing his pale hands, and calling  
to him

Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping  
his head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling  
to him ;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face,  
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps  
for me '

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as  
dead,

That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart 'She weeps  
for me '

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to  
the hall

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
noise

Each hurling down a heap of things that  
rang

Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,

And doff'd his helm and then there  
fluster'd in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen and  
Earl Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against  
the board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his  
spears

And men brought in whole hogs and  
quarter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of  
flesh

And none spake word, but all sat down  
at once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them  
feed ,

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he  
would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and  
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it  
Then he remember'd her, and how she  
wept ,

And out of her there came a power upon  
him ,

And rising on the sudden he said, 'Eat '  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale  
God's curse, it makes me mad to see you  
weep.

Eat ! Look yourself Good luck had  
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep  
for me ?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself

And so there lived some colour in your  
cheek,

There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove  
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,

And I will do the thing I have not done,  
For ye shall share my earldom with me,  
girl,

And we will live like two birds in one  
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all  
fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will'

He spoke the brawny spearman let  
his cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
turning stared,  
While some, whose souls the old serpent  
long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd  
leaf  
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's  
ear

What shall not be recorded—women they,  
Women, or what had been those gracious  
things,  
But now desired the humbling of their  
best,  
Yea, would have help'd him to it and  
all at once  
They hated her, who took no thought of  
them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head  
yet  
Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesies,  
He being as he is, to let me be'

She spake so low he hardly heard her  
speak,  
But like a mighty patron satisfied  
With what himself had done so gracious-  
ously,  
Assumed that she had thank'd him, add-  
ing, 'Yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I  
be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her  
talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing, suddenly seized on  
her,  
And bare her by main violence to the  
board,  
And thrust the dish before her, crying,  
'Eat'

'No, no,' said Enid, next, 'I will not  
eat

Till yonder man upon the bier arise  
And eat with me' 'Drink, then,' he  
answer'd 'Here I'

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it  
to her,)

'Lo' I, myself, when flush'd with fight,  
or hot,

God's curse, with anger—often I myself,  
Before I will have drunken, scarce can  
eat

Drink therefore and the wine will change  
your will'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I  
will not drink

Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me, and if he rise no  
more,

I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his  
hall,

Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper  
lip,

And coming up close to her, said at last  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning yonder man is surely  
dead,

And I compel all creatures to my will  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wait  
for one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and  
scorn

By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus cross me no  
more

At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,

This silken rag, this beggar woman's  
weed

I love that beauty should go beautifully  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beauti-  
fully?

Rise therefore, robe yourself in this  
obey'

He spoke, and one among his gentle-  
women  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the  
front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of  
dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the  
hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung so thickly shone  
the gems

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come, and Enid  
said

'In this poor gown my dear lord found  
me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall  
In this poor gown I rode with him to  
court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the  
sun  
In this poor gown he had me clothe  
myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honour, where no honour can be  
gain'd  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it I have griefs enough  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be  
I never loved, can never love but him  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be'

Then strode the brute Earl up and  
down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his  
teeth,  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his  
mood  
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with  
you,  
Take my salute,' unthinkingly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, 'He had not  
dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the  
wood

This heard Geraint, and grasping at  
his sword,  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a  
sweep of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a  
ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted  
dead

And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise  
and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said

'Enid, I have used you worse than  
that dead man,  
Done you more wrong we both have  
undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice  
your own  
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you  
yesternorn—  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true  
wife

I swear I will not ask your meaning in  
it  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt'

And Enid could not say one tender  
word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart  
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will  
return

And slay you, fly your charger is with-  
out,  
My palfrey lost ' 'Then, Enid, shall you  
ride  
Behind me ' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go '  
And moving out they found the stately  
horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in law ful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came,  
and stoop'd

With a low whinny toward the pair and  
she

Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Gl'd also, then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his  
foot

She set her own and climb'd, he turn'd  
his face

And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast  
her arms

About him, and at once they rode away

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous  
hour

Put hand to hand beneath her husband's  
heart,

And felt him hers again she did not  
weep,

But o'er her meek eyes came a happy  
mist

Like that which kept the heart of Eden  
green

Before the useful trouble of the rain  
Yet not so misty were her meek blue  
eyes

As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his  
lance

In rest, and made as if to fall upon him  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of  
blood,

She, with her mind all full of what had  
chanced,

Shriek'd to the stranger 'Slay not a dead  
man!'

'The voice of Enid,' said the knight,  
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and  
shriek'd again,

'O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
life '

And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake  
'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all  
love ,

I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm,  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon  
him,

Who love you, Prince, with something  
of the love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
chastens us

For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to  
Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw me higher  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,

And since I knew this Earl, when I my  
self

Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
Doorm

(The King is close behind me) bidding  
him

Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
King '

'He hears the judgment of the King  
of kings,'

Cried the wan Prince, 'and lo, the  
powers of Doorm

Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound  
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast  
While some yet fled, and then he plainlier  
told

How the huge Earl lay slain within his  
hall

But when the knight besought him,  
'Follow me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
own ear

Speal what has chanced ; ye surely have  
endured

Strange chances here alone ;' that other  
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
King,

And after madness acted question ask'd  
Till Edyrn crying, ' If ye will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'  
'Enough,' he said, ' I follow,' and they  
went

But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
And one from Edyrn Every now and  
then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men  
may fear

Fresh fire and ruin He, perceiving, said

' Fair and dear cousin, you that most  
had cause

To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to  
make

My nature's prideful spark in the blood  
Break into furious flame, being repulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
wrought

Until I overturn'd him, then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour,  
Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself  
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad  
And, but for my main purpose in these  
jousts,

I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself

I lived in hope that sometime you would  
come

To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved,

And there, poor cousin, with your meek  
blue eyes,

The truest eyes that ever answer'd Heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on him

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd  
to me,

I should not less have kill'd him And  
you came,—

But once you came,—and with your own  
true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
My proud self, and my purpose three  
years old,

And set his foot upon me, and give me  
life

There was I broken down, there was I  
saved

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon  
me

Was but to rest awhile within her court ;  
Where first was sullen as a beast new-caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,  
I found,

Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet strictly, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's in  
deed

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man

And you were often there about the Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw,  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was changed,  
And fear not, cousin, I am changed  
indeed'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or  
foe,

There most in those who most have done  
them ill

And when they reach'd the camp the  
 King himself  
 Advanced to greet them, and beholding  
 her  
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
 word,  
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
 In converse for a little, and return'd,  
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from  
 horse,  
 And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-  
 like,  
 And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and  
 said

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for  
 my leave  
 To move to your own land, and there  
 defend  
 Your marches, I was prick'd with some  
 reproof,  
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate and  
 be,  
 By having look'd too much thro' alien  
 eyes,  
 And wrought too long with delegated  
 hands,  
 Not used mine own but now behold me  
 come  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all my  
 realm,  
 With Edyrn and with others have ye  
 look'd  
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
 changed?  
 This work of his is great and wonderful  
 His very face with change of heart is  
 changed  
 The world will not believe a man repents  
 And this wise world of ours is mainly  
 right.  
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
 quitch  
 Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
 And make all clean, and plant himself  
 afresh  
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart

As I will weed this land before I go  
 I, therefore, made him of our Table  
 Round,  
 Not rashly, but have proved him every  
 way  
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
 Sanest and most obedient. and indeed  
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
 After a life of violence, seems to me  
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his  
 life,  
 My subject with my subjects under him,  
 Should make an onslaught single on a  
 realm  
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
 And were himself nigh wounded to the  
 death.'

So spake the King, low bow'd the  
 Prince, and felt  
 His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
 And past to Enid's tent, and thither came  
 The King's own leech to look into his  
 hurt;  
 And Enid tended on him there, and there  
 Her constant motion round him, and the  
 breath  
 Of her sweet tendrance hovering over him,  
 Fill'd all the general courses of his blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
 As the south-west that blowing Bal lake  
 Fills all the sacred Dee So past the days.

But while Geraunt lay healing of his  
 hurt,  
 The blameless King went forth and cast  
 his eyes  
 On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the  
 King  
 He look'd and found them wanting, and  
 as now  
 Men weed the white horse on the Berk  
 shire hills  
 To keep him bright and clean as hereto  
 fore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at  
 wrong,

And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed  
the land

Then, when Geraunt was whole again,  
they past  
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk  
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
And clothed her in apparel like the day  
And tho' Geraunt could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which  
he took

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed  
upon,  
He rested well content that all was well  
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own  
land

And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man  
of men

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good, and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be, nor did he doubt her more,  
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King

### BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAN the King, who held and lost with  
Lot

In that first war, and had his realm restored  
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
To send his tribute, wherefore Arthur  
call'd

T

His treasurer, one of many years, and  
spake,  
'Go thou with him and him and bring it  
to us,  
Lest we should set one truer on his throne  
Man's word is God in man'

His Baron said  
'We go but harken there be two strange  
knights  
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain-side,  
A mile beneath the forest, challenging  
And overthrowing every knight who  
comes  
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,  
And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him  
'Old friend, too old to be so young,  
depart,  
Delay not thou for ought, but let them  
sit,  
Until they find a lustier than themselves'

So these departed Early, one fair  
dawn,  
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
return'd  
On Arthur's heart, he arm'd himself and  
went,  
So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,  
Brethren, to right and left the spring, that  
down,  
From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom  
of it  
And on the right of Balin Balin's horse  
Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree  
'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit  
ye here?'

Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the sake  
Of glory, we be mightier men than all  
In Arthur's court, that also have we  
proved,  
For whatsoever knight against us came  
Or I or he have easily overthrow'n'  
'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's  
hall,



But rather proven in his P'ynim wars  
Than famous jousts, but see, or proven  
or not,  
Whether me likewise ye can overthrow'  
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren  
down,  
And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside  
The crolling water set themselves again,  
And spake no word until the shadow  
turn'd,  
When from the fringe of coppice round  
them burst

A sprangled pursuivant, and crying 'Sirs,  
Rise, follow' ye be sent for by the  
King.'

They follow'd, whom when Arthur seeing  
ask'd

'Tell me your names, why sat ye by the  
well?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,  
Balin, "the Savage"—that addition  
thine—

My brother and my better, this man here,  
Balan I smote upon the naked skull  
A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand  
Was gauntleted, half slew him, for I  
heard

He had spoken evil of me, thy just wrath  
Sent me a three years' exile from thine  
eyes

I have not lived my life delightfully  
For I that did that violence to thy thrall,  
Had often wrought some fury on myself,  
Saving for Balan those three kingless  
years

Have past—were wormwood-bitter to me  
King,

Methought that if we sat beside the well,  
And hurl'd to ground what knight soever  
spurr'd

Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier  
back,

And make, as ten times worthier to be  
thine

Than twenty Balins, Balan knight I  
have said

Not so—not all A man of thine to-day

Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.  
Thy will?'

Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken truth,  
Thy too fierce manhood would not let  
thee lie

Rise, my true knight As children learn,  
be thou

Wiser for falling! walk with me, and  
move

To music with thine Order and the King  
Thy cheer, a grief to all the brethren,  
stands

Vacant, but thou retrieve it, mine again'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,  
The Lost one I found was greeted as in  
Heaven

With joy that blazed itself in woodland  
wealth

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,  
Along the walls and down the board,  
they sat,

And cup clash'd cup, they drank and  
some one sing,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, where  
upon

Their common shout in chorus, mount  
ing, made

Those banners of twelve battles overhead  
Stir, as they stir'd of old, when Arthur's  
host

Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day was  
won

Then Balan added to their Order lived  
A wealthier life than heretofore with these  
And Balin, till their embassy return'd

'Sir King' they brought report 'we  
hardly found,

So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall  
Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once  
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd  
Horse against horse, but seeing that thy  
realm

Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the  
King

Took, as in rival heart, to holy things,  
And finds himself descended from the  
Saint

Arms and legs, for a to first  
I caught the great lark to Britain over

He bowed his head as pure than the  
of us

But when we to sleep I equal about,  
With path to the light of the world, nor

Of the world to the light of the world,  
Let the world be pure. This pray

Strong and the world to the light of the world,  
my

With the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

There of the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

And the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

By the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

With the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

He much to the light of the world,  
of the world

The world to the light of the world,  
of the world

All matters of the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

Of the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

With much to the light of the world,  
of the world

But when we left, in the deep woods  
we found

A light of the world to the light of the world,  
of the world

Dead, whom we buried; more than one  
of us

Cried out on Carlon, but a woodman  
there

Reported of some der on in the woods  
Was once a man, who driven by evil

From all his fellows, lived alone, and came  
To learn black magic, and to hate his

kind  
With such a hate, that when he died, his

rood  
Became a fiend, which, as the man in life  
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw

not whence,

Strikes from behind This woodman  
show'd the cave

From which he sallies, and wherein he  
dwelt.

We saw the hoof print of a horse, no  
more

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before  
me, see

He do no, full behind me foully slain  
and villainously I who will hunt for me

This demon of the woods?' Said Balan,  
'I'

So clung'd the quest and rode away, but  
first,

Embracing Balin, 'Good my brother,  
hear!

Let not thy moods prevail, when I am  
gone

Who used to lay them ' hold them outer  
fiends,

Who leap at thee to tear thee, shake  
them aside,

Dreams ruling when wit sleeps I yet, but  
to dream

That any of these would wrong thee,  
wrongs thyself

Witness their flowery welcome Bound  
are they

To speak no evil Truly save for fears,  
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship

Would make me wholly blest thou one  
of them,

Be one indeed consider them, and all  
Their bearing in their common bond of

love,  
No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,

No more of jealousy than in Paradise'

So Balin warn'd, and went, Balin  
remain'd

Who—for but three brief moons had  
glanced away

From being knighted till he smote the  
thrall,

And faded from the presence into years  
Of exile—now would stricter set himself

To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,  
Manhood, and knighthood, wherefore

hover'd round

Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high  
 sweet smile  
 In passing, and a transitory word  
 Make knight or churl or child or damsel  
 seem  
 From being smiled at happier in them  
 selves—  
 Sigh'd, as a boy lame born beneath a  
 height,  
 That glooms his valley, sighs to see the  
 peak  
 Sun flush'd, or touch at night the  
 northern star,  
 For one from out his village lately  
 climb'd  
 And brought report of azure lands and  
 fair,  
 Far seen to left and right, and he him  
 self  
 Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred  
 feet  
 Up from the base so Balin marvelling  
 oft  
 How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to  
 move,  
 Groan'd, and at times would mutter,  
 'These be gifts,  
 Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,  
 Beyond my reach Well had I foughten  
 —well—  
 In those fierce wars, struck hard—and  
 had I crown'd  
 With my slain self the heaps of whom I  
 slew—  
 So—better!—But this worship of the  
 Queen,  
 That honour too wherein she holds him  
 —this,  
 This was the sunshine that hath given the  
 man  
 A growth, a name that branches o'er the  
 rest,  
 And strength against all odds, and what  
 the King  
 So prizes—overprizes—gentleness  
 Her likewise would I worship an I might  
 I never can be close with her, as he  
 That brought her hither Shall I pray  
 the King  
 To let me bear some token of his Queen

Whereon to gaze, remembering her—  
 forget  
 My hearts and violences? live afresh?  
 What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant it?  
 my  
 Being so stately gentle, would she make  
 My darkness blackness? and with how  
 sweet grace  
 She greeted my return? Bold will I  
 be—  
 Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
 In lieu of this rough beast upon my  
 shield,  
 Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning  
 savagery'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought  
 him, said  
 'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold,  
 and ask'd  
 To bear her own crown royal upon shield,  
 Whereto she smiled and turn'd her to the  
 King,  
 Who answer'd 'Thou shalt put the crown  
 to use  
 The crown is but the shadow of the King,  
 And this a shadow's shadow, let him  
 have it,  
 So this will help him of his violences'  
 'No shadow' said Sir Balin 'O my  
 Queen,  
 But light to me! no shadow, O my King,  
 But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the  
 knights  
 Approved him, and the Queen, and all  
 the world  
 Made music, and he felt his being move  
 In music with his Order, and the King

The nightingale, full toned in middle  
 May,  
 Hath ever and anon a note so thin  
 It seems another voice in other groves,  
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden  
 wrath,  
 The music in him seem'd to change, and  
 grow  
 Faint and far off

And once he saw the thrall  
 His passion half had gauntleted to death,  
 That cause of his banishment and shame,  
 Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously  
 His arm half rose to strike again, but  
 fell.  
 The memory of that cognizance on shield  
 Weighted it down, but in himself he  
 morn'd.

'Too high this mount of Camelot for  
 me.  
 These high set courtesies are not for me  
 Shall I not rather prove the worse for  
 these?  
 Fiercer and stormier from restraining,  
 break  
 Into some madness ev'n before the  
 Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain  
 home,  
 And glancing on the window, when the  
 gloom  
 Of twilight deepens round it, seems a  
 flame  
 That rages in the woodland far below,  
 So when his moods were darken'd, court  
 and King  
 And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's  
 hall  
 Shadow'd in angry distance yet he  
 strove  
 To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
 Hard with himself, and seem'd at length  
 in peace

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir  
 Balin sat  
 Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the  
 hall  
 A walk of roses ran from door to door,  
 A walk of lilies crost it to the bower  
 And down that range of roses the great  
 Queen  
 Came with slow steps, the morning on  
 her face,  
 And all in shadow from the counter door  
 Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,

As if he saw not, glanced aside, and  
 paced  
 The long white walk of lilies toward the  
 bower  
 Follow'd the Queen, Sir Balin heard her  
 'Prince,  
 Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,  
 As pass without good morrow to thy  
 Queen?'  
 To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on  
 earth,  
 'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen'  
 'Yet so' she said 'but so to pass me  
 by—  
 So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
 Whom all men rate the king of courtesy  
 Let be ye stand, fair lord, as in a  
 dream'

Then Lancelot with his hand among  
 the flowers  
 'Yea—for a dream Last night me-  
 thought I saw  
 That maiden Saint who stands with lily  
 in hand  
 In yonder shrine All round her prest  
 the dark,  
 And all the light upon her silver face  
 Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she  
 held  
 Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes  
 —away  
 For see, how perfect pure! As light a  
 flush  
 As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
 Would mar their charm of stainless  
 maidenhood'

'Sweeter to me' she said 'this garden  
 rose  
 Deep hued and many-folded! sweeter  
 still  
 The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom  
 of May  
 Prince, we have ridd'n before among the  
 flowers  
 In those fair days—not all as cool as  
 these,  
 Tho' season-earlier Art thou sad? or  
 sick?

Our noble King will send thee his own  
leech—  
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes,  
they dwelt  
Deep tranced on hers, and could not fall  
her hue  
Changed at his gaze so turning side by  
side  
They past, and Balin started from his  
bower

'Queen? subject? but I see not what  
I see  
Damsel and lover? hear not what I  
hear  
My father hath begotten me in his wrath  
I suffer from the things before me, know,  
Learn nothing, am not worthy to be  
knight,  
A churl, a clown' and in him gloom on  
gloom  
Deepen'd he sharply caught his lance  
and shield,  
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the  
King,  
But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd  
away

He took the selfsame track as Balan,  
saw  
The fountain where they sat together,  
sigh'd  
'Was I not better there with him?' and  
rode  
The skyless woods, but under open blue  
Came on the hoarhead woodman at a  
bough  
Weirily hewing 'Churl, thine axe'  
he cried,  
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow  
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
ingly  
'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of  
these woods  
If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin  
cried  
'Him, or the vile devil who plays his  
part.

To lay that devil would lay the Devil in  
me'

'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil' is a  
truth,

I saw the flash of him but yestereven  
And some do say that our Sir Garlon too  
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
unseen

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd  
him

'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,  
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving  
him,

Now with slack rein and careless of him-  
self,

Now with dug spur and raving at him-  
self,

Now with droopt brow down the long  
glades he rode,

So mark'd not on his right a cavern chasm  
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far  
within,

The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd  
on rocks

Roof-pendent, sharp, and others from  
the floor,

Tusklike, arising, made that mouth or  
night

Whereout the Demon issued up from  
Hell

He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf  
to all

Save that chain'd rage, which ever yelp'd  
within,

Past eastward from the falling sun At  
once

He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
And tremble, and then the shadow of a  
spear,

Shot from behind him, ran along the  
ground

Sideways he started from the path, and  
saw,

With pointed lance as if to pierce, a  
shape,

A light of armour by him flash, and  
pass

And vanish in the woods, and follow'd  
this,

But all so blind in rage that unawares

He burst his lance against a forest bough,  
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and  
fled

Far, till the castle of a King, the hall  
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, gnyly draped  
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built  
but strong,

The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
The battlement overtopped with ivytods,  
A home of bats, in every tower an owl

Then spake the men of Pellam crying

'Lord,

Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
shield?'

Said Balin 'For the fairest and the best  
Of ladies living gave me this to bear'

So stall'd his horse, and strode across the  
court,

But found the greetings both of knight  
and King

Faint in the low dark hall of banquet  
leaves

Laid their green faces flat against the  
pines,

Sprays grated, and the tanker'd boughs  
without

Whined in the wood, for all was hush'd  
within,

Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise  
ask'd

'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin  
said

'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,  
and all,

As fairest, best and purest, granted me  
To bear it'

Such a sound (for Arthur's

knights  
Were hated strangers in the hall) as  
makes

The white swan-mother, sitting when she  
hears

A strange knee rustle thro' her secret  
reeds,

Made Garlon, hissing, then he sourly  
smiled

'Fairest I grant her I have seen, but  
best,

Best, purest? thou from Arthur's hall,  
and yet

So simple 'hast thou eyes, or if, are these  
So far besotted that they fail to see  
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes'

A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd  
With holy Joseph's legend, on his right  
Stood, all of massiest bronze one side  
had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing on  
it

And one was rough with wathing, and  
the walls

Of that low church he built at Glaston  
bury

This Balin graspt, but while in act to  
hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the  
shield

Relax'd his hold 'I will be gentle' he  
thought

'And passing gentle' caught his hand  
away

Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'Eyes have I  
That saw to day the shadow of a spear,

Shot from behind me, run along the  
ground,

Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
Lancelot draws

From homage to the best and purest,  
might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty  
thine,

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
endure

To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy  
guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table Felon talk!  
Let be! no more!

But not the less by night

The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his  
rest,

Stung him in dreams At length, and  
dim thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,  
and old boughs

Whined in the wood He rose, de-  
scended, met

The scorner in the castle court, and fain,  
For hate and loathing, would have past  
him by,

But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
wise,

'What, wear ye still that same crown-  
scandalous?'

His countenance blacken'd, and his  
forehead veins

Blotched, and branch'd, and tearing out  
of sheath

The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha'

So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
ghost,'

Hard upon helm smote him, and the  
blade flew

Splintering in six, and clink'd upon the  
stones

Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward,  
fell,

And Balin by the banneret of his helm

Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the  
castle a cry

Sounded across the court, and—men at-  
arms,

A score with pointed lances, making at  
him—

He dash'd the pommel at the foremost  
face,

Beneath a low door dipt, and made his  
feet

Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he  
mark'd

The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide

And inward to the wall, he stept behind,  
Thence in a moment heard them pass  
like wolves

Howling, but while he stared about the  
shrine,

In which he scarce could spy the Christ  
for Saints,

Beheld before a golden altar lie

The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,  
Point-painted red, and seizing thereupon

Push'd thro' an open casement down,  
lean'd on it,

Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth,  
Then hand at ear, and harkening from  
what side

The blindfold rummage buried in the walls

Might echo, ran the counter path, and  
found

His charger, mounted on him and away

An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to  
the left,

One overhead, and Pellam's feeble cry

'Stay, stay him' he defileth heavenly  
things

With earthly uses'—made him quickly  
dive

Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many  
a mile

Of dense and open, till his goodly horse  
Arising wearily at a fallen oak,

Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to  
ground

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all  
glad,

Knightlike, to find his charger yet un-  
lamed,

Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,  
Stared at the priceless cognizance, and  
thought

'I have shamed thee so that now thou  
shamest me,

Thee will I bear no more,' high on a  
branch

Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,  
And there in gloom cast himself all  
along,

Moaning 'My violences, my violences!'

But now the wholesome music of the  
wood

Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of  
Mark

A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode

The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her  
Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the barren  
cold,

And kindled all the plain and all the  
wood

The new leaf ever pushes off the old

The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
Hell

'Old priest, who mumble worship in  
your quire—

Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's  
desire,  
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire !  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
Hell

'The fire of Heaven is on the dusty  
ways  
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
The whole wood world is one full pearl  
of praise,  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
Hell

'The fire of Heaven is lord of all things  
good,  
And starve not thou this fire within thy  
blood,  
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood !  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
Hell !'

Then turning to her Squire 'This fire  
of Heaven,  
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,  
And beat the cross to earth, and break  
the King  
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lane of cloudless  
air  
Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm  
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her  
Squire,  
Amazed were these, 'Lo there' she  
cried—'a crown—  
Borne by some high lord-prince of  
Arthur's hall,  
And there a horse ! the rider ? where is  
he ?  
See, yonder lies one dead within the  
wood  
Not dead, he stirs !—but sleeping I  
will speak  
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet  
rest,  
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble  
deeds

But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's  
hall,  
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
shame,  
A lustful King, who sought to win my  
love  
Thro' evil ways the knight, with whom  
I rode,  
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my  
squire  
Hath in him small defence, but thou  
Sir Prince,  
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,  
Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,  
To get me shelter for my maidenhood  
I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
shield,  
And by the great Queen's name, arise  
and hence'

And Balin rose, 'Thither no more !  
nor Prince  
Nor knight am I, but one that hath  
defamed  
The cognizance she gave me here I  
dwell  
Savage among the savage woods, here  
die—  
Die let the wolves' black maws en-  
sepulchre  
Their brother beast, whose anger was his  
lord  
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,  
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted  
up,  
And been thereby uplifted, should thro'  
me,  
My violence, and my villainy, come to  
shame'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and  
shrill, anon  
Sigh'd all as suddenly Said Balin to her  
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha ?  
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again  
she sigh'd  
'Pardon, sweet lord ! we maidens often  
laugh  
When sick at heart, when rather we  
should weep



I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy  
rest,  
And now full lo'h am I to breal thy  
dream,  
But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,  
Tho' bitter Hither, boy—and mark  
me well  
Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—  
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—  
Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer  
dawn—  
By the great tower—Caerleon upon  
Usk—  
Nay truly we were hidden this fur  
lord,  
The flower of all their vestal knighthood,  
kne't  
'n amorous homage—kne't—what else?  
—O ay  
Kne't, and drew down from out his  
night-black hair  
And mumbled that white hand whose  
ring'd caress  
Had wander'd from her own King's  
golden herd,  
And lost itself in darkness, till she  
cried—  
I thought the great tower would crash  
down on both—  
“Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on  
the lips,  
‘Thou art my King’” This lad, whose  
lightest word  
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,  
Saw them embrace he reddens, cannot  
speak,  
So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
The deathless mother maidenhood of  
Heaven,  
Cry out upon her Up then, ride with  
me!  
Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an  
thou would'st,  
Do these more shame than these have  
done themselves'

She lied with ease, but horror-stricken  
he,  
Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,  
Preathed in a dismal whisper 'It is truth'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in this  
lone wood,  
Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper  
this  
Fools prate, and perish traitors - Woods  
have tongues,  
As walls have ears - but thou shalt go  
with me,  
And we will speak at first exceeding  
low  
Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
See now, I set thee high on vantage  
ground,  
From whence to watch the time, and  
eagle like  
Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the  
Queen'

She ceased, his evil spirit upon him  
leapt,  
He ground his teeth together, sprang  
with a yell,  
Tore from the branch, and cast on earth,  
the shield,  
Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal  
crown,  
St umpt all into defacement, hurl'd it from  
him  
Among the forest weeds, and cursed the  
tale,  
The told of, and the teller

That weird yell,  
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or  
beast,  
Thrill'd thro' the woods, and Balan  
lurking there  
(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard  
and thought  
'The scream of that Wood-devil I came  
to quell!'  
Then nearing 'Lo' he hath slain some  
brother-knight,  
And tramples on the goodly shield to  
show  
His loathing of our Order and the Queen  
My quest, meseems, is here Or devil  
or man  
Guard thou thine head' Sir Balin spake  
not word,

But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the  
Squire,  
And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
crash'd  
In-onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
Repute'd to be red with sinless blood,  
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the  
point.

Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd  
The hubbuck to the flesh; and Balin's  
horse

Was warn'd to the death, and, when  
they crash'd

Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man  
Inward, and never fell, and swoon'd  
away

Then to her Squire mutter'd the  
damsel 'Fool'

This fellow hath wrought some foulness  
with his Queen

Else never had he borne her crown, nor  
raved

And thus form'd over to a rival name  
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast  
broken shell,

Art yet half-yolk, not even come to  
do n—

Who never sawest Czerleem upon Usk—  
And yet hast often pleaded for my love—  
See what I see, be thou where I have  
been,

Or else Sir Chick—dismount and loose  
their creques

I fain would know what manner of men  
they be

And when the Squire had loosed them,  
'Goodly!—look'

They might have cropt the myrrid flower  
of May,

And butt each other here, like brunless  
bulls,

Dead for one hauser!

Then the gentle Squire  
'I hold them happy, so they died for  
love

And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your  
dog,

I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I  
better prize

The living dog than the dead lion away.  
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead'

Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,  
And bounding forward 'Leave them to  
the wolves'

but when their foreheads felt the cool  
ing air,

Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,  
I smil'd up from cradle time, so wan,

Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where  
he lay,

And on his dying brother cast himself  
Dying, and he lifted furt eyes, he felt  
One near him, all at once they found the  
world,

Staring wild-wide, then with a childlike  
wail,

And drawing down the dim disastrous  
brow

That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd  
and spake,

'O Balin, Balin, I that fun had died  
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy  
death

Why had ye not the shield I knew? and  
why

Trampled ye thus on that which bare the  
Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in  
gasps,

All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd  
again

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's  
hall

This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded  
not

And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,  
And hates thee for the tribute!" this  
good knight

Told me, that twice a wanton damsel  
came,

And sought for Garlon at the castle gates,  
Whom Pellam drove away with holy  
heat.

I well believe this damsel, and the one  
Who stood beside thee even now, the  
same.

"She dwells among the woods" he said  
"and meets

And dallies with him in the Mouth of  
Hell "

Foul are their lives, foul are their lips,  
they lied

Pure as our own true Mother is our  
Queen '

'O brother' answer'd Balin 'woe is  
me '

My madness all thy life has been thy  
doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day,  
and now

The night has come I scarce can see  
thee now

Goodnight! for we shall never bid again  
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here,  
and dark

It will be there I see thee now no  
more

I would not mine again should darken  
thine,

Goodnight, true brother '

Balin answer'd low

'Goodnight, true brother here! good  
morrow there!

We two were born together, and we  
die

Together by one doom.' and while he  
spoke

Closed his death drowsing eyes, and slept  
the sleep

With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A storm was coming, but the winds  
were still,

And in the wild woods of Brocelande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old

It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,

At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay

For he that always bare in bitter  
grudge

The slights of Arthur and his Table, Mark  
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering  
voice,

A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say

That out of naked knightlike purity  
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl.

But the great Queen herself, fought in her  
name,

Swore by her—vows like theirs, that high  
in heaven

Love most, out neither marry, nor are  
given

In marriage, angels of our Lord's report

He ceased, and then—for Vivien  
sweetly said

(She sat beside the banquet nearest Mark),  
'And is the fair example follow'd, Sir,

In Arthur's household?'—answer'd inno-  
cently:

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths  
that hold

It more beseems the perfect virgin knight  
To worship woman as true wife beyond

All hopes of gaining, than as maiden girl  
They place their pride in Lancelot and

the Queen.

So passionate for an utter purity  
Beyond the limit of their bond, are these

For Arthur bound them not to singleness  
Brave hearts and clean! and yet—God

guide them—young '

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl  
his cup

Straight at the speaker, but forbore he  
rose

To leave the hall, and, Vivien following  
him,

Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within  
the grass;

And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye fear  
The monkish manhood, and the mask of

pure  
Worn by this court, can stir them till they  
sting '

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-  
fully,  
'Why fear? because that foster'd at *thy*  
court  
I savour of thy—virtues? fear them? no  
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out  
fear,  
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out  
fear  
My father died in battle against the King,  
My mother on his corpse in open field,  
She bore me there, for born from death  
was I  
Among the dead and sown upon the  
wind—  
And then on thee ' and shown the truth  
betimes,  
That old true filth, and bottom of the well,  
Where Truth is hidden Gracious lessons  
thine  
And maxims of the mud ' "This Arthur  
pure '  
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself hath  
made  
Gives him the lie ' There is no being  
pure,  
My cherub, saith not Holy Writ the  
same? "  
If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.  
Thy blessing, stainless King ' I bring  
thee back,  
When I have ferreted out their burrow-  
ings,  
The hearts of all this Order in mine  
hand—  
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly close,  
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden  
beard.  
To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine  
Is cleaner-fashion'd—Well, I loved thee  
first,  
That warps the wit '

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.  
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged  
Lov' in the city, and on a festal day  
When Guinevere was crossing the great  
hall  
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,  
and wail'd

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have  
ye wrought?  
Rise ' and the damsel bidden rise arose  
And stood with folded hands and down  
ward eyes  
Of glancing corner, and all meekly said,  
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an  
orphan maid '  
My father died in battle for thy King,  
My mother on his corpse—in open field,  
Thesadsea sounding wastes of Lyonesse—  
Poor wretch—no friend '—and now by  
Mark the King  
For that small charm of feature mine,  
pursued—  
If any such be mine—I fly to thee  
Save, save me thou—Woman of women—  
thine  
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of  
power,  
Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's  
own white  
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless  
King—  
Help, for he follows ' take me to thyself '  
O yield me shelter for mine innocency  
Among thy maidens '

Here her slow sweet eyes  
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose  
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen  
who stood  
All glittering like May sunshine on May  
leaves  
In green and gold, and plumed with green  
replied,  
'Peace, child ' of overpraise and over-  
blame  
We choose the last Our noble Arthur,  
him  
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and  
know  
Nay—we believe all evil of thy Mark—  
Well, we shall test thee farther, but this  
hour  
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot  
He hath given us a fair falcon which he  
train'd,  
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the  
while.'

She past, and Vivien murmur'd after  
 'Go'  
 I bide the while' Then thro' the portal-  
 arch  
 Peering askance, and muttering broken-  
 wise,  
 As one that labours with an evil dream,  
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
 horse

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay, but  
 gaunt  
 Courteous—amends for gauntness—takes  
 her hand—  
 That glance of theirs, but for the street,  
 had been  
 A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in  
 hand!  
 Let go at last!—they ride away—to hawk  
 For waterfowl Royaller game is mine  
 For such a supersensual sensual bond  
 As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
 hearth—  
 Touch flax with flame—a glance will serve  
 —the liars!  
 Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless  
 deep  
 Down upon far-off cities while they  
 dance—  
 Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—  
 nor of me  
 These—ay, but each of either ride, and  
 dream  
 The mortal dream that never yet was  
 mine—  
 Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—to  
 me!  
 Then, narrow court and lubber King,  
 farewell!  
 For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,  
 And our wise Queen, if knowing that I  
 know,  
 Will hate, loathe, fear—but honour me  
 the more'

Yet while they rode together down the  
 plain,  
 Their talk was all of training, terms of art,  
 Det and seeling, jesses, leash and lure

'She is too noble' he said 'to check at  
 pies,  
 Nor will she rake there is no baseness  
 in her'  
 Here when the Queen demanded as by  
 chance  
 'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let  
 her be,'  
 Said Lancelot and unhooded casting off  
 The goodly falcon free, she tower'd  
 her bells,  
 Tone under tone, shrill'd, and they listea  
 up  
 Their eager faces, wondering at the  
 strength,  
 Boldness and royal knighthood of the bird  
 Who pounced her quarry and slew it  
 Many a time  
 As once—of old—among the flowers—  
 they rode

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen  
 Among her damsels brodering sat, heard,  
 watch'd  
 And whisper'd thro' the peaceful court  
 she crept  
 And whisper'd then as Arthur in the  
 highest  
 Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
 lowest,  
 Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
 And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,  
 While all the heathen lay at Arthur's feet.  
 And no quest came, but all was joust and  
 play,  
 Leaven'd his hall They heard and let  
 her be

Thereafter as an enemy that has left  
 Death in the living waters, and with-  
 drawn,  
 The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court

She hated all the knights, and heard in  
 thought  
 Their lavish comment when her name  
 was named  
 For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
 Vext at a rumour issued from herself  
 Of some corruption crept among his  
 knights,

Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
 Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy  
 mood  
 With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken  
 voice,  
 And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
 With dark sweet hints of some who  
 prized him more  
 Than who should prize him most; at  
 which the King  
 Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by  
 But one had watch'd, and had not held  
 his peace.  
 It made the laughter of an afternoon  
 That Vivien should attempt the blameless  
 King  
 And after that, she set herself to gain  
 him, the most famous man of all those  
 times,  
 Merlin, who knew the range of all their  
 arts,  
 Had built the King his havens, ships,  
 and halls,  
 Was also Bird, and knew the starry  
 heavens,  
 The people call'd him Wizard, whom at  
 first  
 She play'd about with slight and sprightly  
 talk,  
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
 points  
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
 there,  
 And yielding to his kindlier moods, the  
 Scer  
 Would watch her at her petulance, and  
 ply,  
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable, and  
 laugh  
 As those that watch a kitten, thus he  
 grew  
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and  
 she,  
 Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
 Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when they  
 met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old  
 man,

Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
 times  
 Would flatter his own wish in rage for love,  
 And half believe her true for thus at  
 times  
 He waver'd, but that other clung to him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy,  
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,  
 and he found  
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
 World war of dying flesh against the life,  
 Death in all life and lying in all love,  
 The meanest having power upon the  
 highest,  
 And the high purpose broken by the  
 worm

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the  
 beach,  
 There found a little boat, and stept into  
 it,  
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her  
 not  
 She took the helm and he the sail, the  
 boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
 deeps,  
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-  
 embark'd  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Brocelande  
 For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
 The which if any wrought on anyone  
 With woven paces and with waving arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
 From which was no escape for evermore,  
 And none could find that man for ever-  
 more,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
 the charm  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame  
 And Vivien ever sought to work the  
 charm  
 Upon the great Enchanter of the Time

As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she  
quench'd

There lay she all her length and kiss'd  
his feet,

As if in deepest reverence and in love  
A twist of gold was round her hair, a  
robe

Of samite without price, that more exprest  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
limbs,

In colour like the satin-shining palm  
On shallows in the windy gleams of March  
And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
'Trample me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the  
world,

And I will pay you worship, tread me  
down

And I will kiss you for it,' he was mute  
So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
brain,

As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
The blind wave feeling round his long  
sea-hall

In silence wherefore, when she lifted up  
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once  
more,

'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was  
mute

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
Writhed toward him, slided up his knee  
and sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
Together, curved an arm about his neck,  
Clung like a snake, and letting her left  
hand

Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
Made with her right a comb of pearl to  
part

The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
Had left in ashes then he spoke and said,  
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in love  
Love most, say lest,' and Vivien an-  
swer'd quick,

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot

But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid  
child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think  
Silence is wisdom I am silent then,  
And ask no kiss,' then adding all at once,  
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,  
drew

The wet and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
Who meant to erit her up in that wild  
wood

Without one word So Vivien call'd  
herself,

But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
Veil'd in gray vapour, till he sadly  
smiled

'To what request for what strange boon,'  
he said,

'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
'What, O my Master, have ye found  
your voice?

I bid the stranger welcome Thanks at  
last!

But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink no cup had we  
In mine own lady palms I call'd the  
spring

That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
the cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling then you  
drank

And know no more, nor gave me one  
poor word,

O no more thanks than might a goat have  
given

With no more sign of reverence than a  
beard

And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
those

Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
you know

That Vivien betray your feet before her  
own?

And yet not thanks and all thro' this  
wild world

And with a warning when I sought you,  
Boon, yes, there was a boon, one boon so  
strange—

How had I wronged you? surely ye are  
wise,

But such a silence is more wise than  
noise.

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
as I said

'O did ye never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming  
wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
breaks?

Ever on a wave, I was so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of so depressing mood,

Had I for three days seen, ready to fall  
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
court

To break the mood. You follow'd me  
unask'd;

And when I look'd, and saw you following  
still,

My mind involved yourself the nearest  
thing

In that round-mist, for shall I tell you  
truth?

You seem'd that ware abo it to break upon  
me

And sweep me from my hold upon the  
world,

My use and name and fame. Your pardon,  
child.

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
again

And ask your boon, for boon I owe you  
thrice,

Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
next

For thanks it seems till now neglected,  
last

For these your darty gambols. wherefore  
ask;

And take this boon so strange and not so  
strange.

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
fully—

'O not so strange as my long asking it,  
Not yet so strange as you yourself are  
strange,

Nor half so strange as that dark mood of  
yours

I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
And see, yourself have own'd ye did me  
wrong

The people call you prophet let it be  
But not of those that can expound them  
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Take Vivien for expounder; she will call  
That three-days long presageful gloom of  
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No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
That makes you seem less noble than  
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Now ask'd again for see you not, dear  
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That such a mood as that which lately  
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Your fancy when ye saw me following  
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Must make me fear still more you are not  
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Must make me learn still more to prove  
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And make me wish still more to learn  
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Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me

The charm so taught will charm us both  
to rest.

For, grant me some slight power upon  
your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you  
mine

And therefore be as great as ye are named,  
Not muffled round with selfish reticence

How hard you look and how denyingly  
O, if you think this wickedness in me,

That I should prove it on you unawares,  
That makes me passing wrathful; then

our bond

Had best be loosed for ever—but think  
or not,

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By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean  
truth,  
As clean as blood of babes, as white as  
milk

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir  
hell

Down, down, and close again, and nip  
me flat,

If I be such a traitress Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am,  
And grant my re reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love because I  
think,

However wise, ye hardly know me yet'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers  
and said,

'I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a  
charm

Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd  
man

Thro' woman the first hour, for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the  
world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the  
lines,

I call it,—well, I will not call it vice  
But since you name yourself the summer  
fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will ye never ask some other boon?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted  
maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,

Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears  
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your  
maid,

Caress her let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon  
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all"  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
And it shall answer for me Listen to it

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love  
be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal  
powers  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all'

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all

"The little rift within the lover's lute  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping let it go  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no  
And trust me not at all or all in all"

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed  
her true,

So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her  
tears

Like sunlight on the plun behind a  
shower

And yet he answer'd half indignantly

'Far other was the song that once I  
heard

By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit  
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden  
horns

It was the time when first the question  
rose

About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the  
world

And each incited each to noble deeds  
 And while we waited, one, the youngest  
 of us,  
 We could not keep him silent, out he  
 rush'd,  
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
 Such trumpet blowing, in it, coming down  
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
 That when he stop't we long'd to hurl  
 together.  
 And should have done it, but the bea-  
 stious beast  
 Scared by the noise & started at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Thro' the dim land, and all day long we  
 rode  
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing  
 wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our  
 ears,  
 And chased the fancies of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That hugg'd it iron—as our warriors did—  
 Where children cast their pins and nails,  
 and cry,  
 "Lugh, little well!" but touch it with  
 a sword,  
 It buzzes fiercely round the point and  
 there  
 We lost him such a noble song was that  
 Bat, Vivien when you sang me that sweet  
 rhyme,  
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and  
 fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully  
 'O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
 And all thro' following you to this wild  
 wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you  
 Lo now, what hearts have men! they  
 never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood  
 And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my  
 song,  
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it  
 —this—

"My name, once mine, now thine, is  
 closerlier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame  
 were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine, that  
 shame were mine  
 So trust me not at all or all in all"

'Says she not well? and there is more  
 —this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the  
 Queen,  
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls  
 were spilt,  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics  
 kept  
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each  
 other  
 On her white neck—so is it with this  
 rhyme  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
 And every minstrel sings it differently,  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of  
 pearls  
 "Man dreams of Fame while woman  
 wakes to love."  
 Yet! Love, tho' Love were of the gross-  
 est, carves  
 A portion from the solid present, eats  
 And uses, careless of the rest, but Fame,  
 The Fame that follows death is nothing  
 to us,  
 And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
 And counterchnged with darkness? ye  
 yourself  
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil's  
 son,  
 And since ye seem the Master of all Art,  
 They fain would make you Master of all  
 vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and  
 said,  
 'I once was looking for a magic weed,  
 And found a fur young squire who sat  
 alone,  
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of  
 wood,  
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,

Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
In dexter chief, the scroll "I follow  
fame"

And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a grass,  
With this for motto, "Rather use than  
fame"

You should have seen him blush, but  
afterwards

He made a stalwart knight O Vivien,  
I or you, methinks you think you love me  
well,

For me, I love you somewhat, rest and  
Love

Should have some rest and pleasure in  
himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him ye say ye love but Fame with  
men,

Being but ampler means to serve man  
kind,

Should have small rest or pleasure in  
herself,

But work is assal to the larger love,  
That darts the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame  
again

Increasing gave me use Lo, there my  
boon!

What other? for men sought to prove me  
vile,

Because I fain had given them greater  
wits

And then did Envy call me Devil's son  
The sick weak beast seeking to help her  
self

By striking at her better, miss'd, and  
brought

Her own claw back, and wounded her  
own heart

Sweet were the days when I was all un-  
known,

But when my name was lifted up, the  
storm

Brake on the mountain and I cared not  
for it.

Right well know I that Fame is half-  
disfame,

Yet needs must work my work. That  
o'er fame,

To one at least, who hath not children,  
vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it a single misty star,

Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,

I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star

To make fame nothing Wherefore, if I  
fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this  
charm,

That you might play me falsely, having  
power,

However well ye think ye love me now  
(As sons of Kings loving in pupillage

Have turn'd to tyrants when they came  
to power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame:  
If you—and not so much from wickedness

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrun'd affection, it may be,

To keep me all to your own self,—or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—

Should try this charm on whom ye say ye  
love'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
wrath

'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.  
Good'

Well, hide it, hide it, I shall find it out,  
And being found take heed of Vivien

A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born

Of your misfaith, and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine

Without the full heart brick may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd So used as I,

My duly wonder is, I love at all  
And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?

O to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,

Was this fur charm invented by yourself?  
I well believe that all about this world

Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower

From which is no escape for evermore'

Then the great Master merrily answered  
her -  
‘Full many a loe in loving youth was  
mine,  
I needed then no charms to keep them mine  
But youth and love; and thine full heart  
of yours  
Whereof ye prattle, may I now assure you  
mine -  
So live uncharmed For those who  
wrought it first,  
The worst is putted from the ward the  
waves,  
The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
bones  
Who pierce it never back but will ye hear  
The legends as in guerdon for your rhyme?’  
‘There lived a king in the most Eastern  
Isle,  
Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be  
A tawny pirate anchored in his port,  
Whose bar had plundered twenty name-  
less isles,  
And pressing one, at the lugh reep of  
dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea,  
And passing his black craft among them  
all,  
He lightly scatter’d theirs and brought  
her off,  
With loss of half his people arrow-slain  
A mud so smooch so white, so wonderful,  
They said a light came from her when she  
moved  
And since the pirate would not yield her  
up,  
The King impaled him for his piracy,  
Then made her Queen but those idle  
nurtured eyes  
Waged such unwilling tho’ successful war  
On all the youth, they sicken’d, councils  
thinn’d,  
And armies waned, for magnet-like she  
drew  
The rustiest iron of old fighters’ hearts,  
And beasts themselves would worship,  
camels knelt

Unbuckled, and the brutes of mountain  
back  
That carry kings in castles, bow’d black  
knees  
Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
hands,  
To melt her smile, her golden ankle-bells  
What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
His horns of proclamation out thro’ all  
The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
sway’d  
To find a wizard who might teach the King  
Some charm, which being wrought upon  
the Queen  
Might keep her all his own to such a one  
He promised more than ever king has  
given,  
A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
A prince and a princess, all for him  
But on all those who tried and fail’d, the  
King  
Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning  
by it  
To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
Their heads should moulder on the city  
gates  
And many tried and fail’d, because the  
charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own  
And many a wizard brow bleach’d on the  
walls  
And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
towers’  
And Vivien breaking in upon him, said  
‘I sit and gather honey, yet, methinks,  
Thy tongue has tript a little ask thyself.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes she had her pleasure  
in it,  
And made her good man jealous with good  
cause  
And lived there neither dame nor damsel  
then  
Wroth at a lover’s loss? were all as tame,  
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair  
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,

Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?  
Well, those were not our days but did  
they find  
A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her  
eyes  
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a  
bride's  
On her new lord, her own, the first of men

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not like  
to me  
At last they found—his forgers for  
charms—  
A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass,  
Read but one book, and ever reading  
grew  
So grated down and filed away with  
thought,  
So lean his eyes were monstrous, while  
the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and  
spine  
And since he kept his mind on one sole  
aim,  
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted  
flesh,  
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
That sunders ghosts and shadow casting  
men  
Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
And heard their voices talk behind the  
wall,  
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
And forces, often o'er the sun's bright eye  
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
storm,  
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood  
roar'd,  
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,  
sunn'd  
The world to peace again. here was the  
man.

And so by force they dragg'd him to the  
King  
And then he taught the King to charm  
the Queen  
In such-wise, that no man could see her  
more,  
Nor saw she save the King, who wrought  
the charm,  
Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
And lost all use of life but when the King  
Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
The palace and the princess, that old man  
Went back to his old wild, and lived on  
grass,  
And vanish'd, and his book came down  
to me'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily.  
'Ye have the book the charm is written  
in it  
Good take my counsel let me know it  
at once  
For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd  
thirty-fold,  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
mound  
As after furious battle turfs the slun  
On some wild down above the windy deep,  
I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
To dig, pick, open, find and read the  
charm  
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me  
then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long, he answer'd her

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas,  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by  
So long, that mountains have arisen since



A stainless man beside a stainless maid,  
And either slept, nor knew of other there,  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely  
down,

Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from  
her

But when the thing was blazed about the  
court,

The brute world howling forced them into  
bonds,

And as it chanced they are happy, being  
pure'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely  
too

What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless limb of  
Christ,

Or some black wether of St Satan's fold  
What, in the precincts of the chapel yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Illic Jacets of the dead'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her  
charge,

'A sober man is Percivale and pure,  
But once in life was fluster'd with new  
wine,

Then paced for coolness in the chapel-  
yard,

Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's  
mark,

And that he sinn'd is not believable,  
For, look upon his face!—but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings  
remorse,

Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose  
hymns

Are chanted in the minster, worse than all  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye  
more?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in  
wrath

'O ay, what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend

Traitor or true? that commerce with the  
Queen,  
I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know  
it?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'Yea, I  
know it

Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from  
her walls

A rumour runs, she took him for the King,  
So fixt her fancy on him let them be  
But have ye no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless  
man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling  
laugh

'Man' is he man at all, who knows and  
winks?

Sees what his fair bride is and does, and  
winks?

By which the good King means to blind  
himself,

And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
Could call him (were it not for womanhood)

The pretty, popular name such manhood  
earns,

Could call him the main cause of all their  
crime;

Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward,  
and fool'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing,  
said

'O true and tender! O my liege and  
King!

O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye wit-  
ness fail

Have all men true and leal, all women  
pure,

How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible

To things with every sense as false and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle

street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
blame!'

But Vivian, deeming Merlin's words  
By instance, not command, and let her  
tongue  
Kings like a fire among the noblest nations,  
Polluting, and impugning her white self  
Defaming, and debasing all she life  
Not even Lancelot's brave, nor Galahad  
clean

Her words had more power than she  
would  
He drank'd her eyes even hushes on,  
and smile  
A snowy pathos for his hollow eyes  
And murmur'd in himself, 'Till for the  
charm'

So, if she had it, would she rid on me  
To snare the man, and if she had it not  
So will she rid. What dost thou intend?  
"Not mount as high," was her answer  
as low

For men at most suffer as Heaven and  
earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven  
and Hell

I know the Table Round, my friends of  
old,  
All brave, and many generous, and some  
chaste

She chose the seat of some repulse with  
her

I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
Being so bitter for fine pious may fail,  
This harlot's punishment as well as free  
With colours of the heart that are no there  
I will not let her know mine tithes of  
times

Face flatterer and back biter are the same  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute  
crime

Are prone to it, and impute themselves  
Wanting the mental ring, or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all,  
Yet, they would pare the mountain to the  
plain,

To leave an equal baseness, and in this  
Are harlots like the crowd, that if true, find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so  
small,

Instate themselves with some insane  
delight,  
And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual  
fire,  
And touching other worlds I am weary  
of her'

He spoke in words part heard, in  
whispers part,  
Half suffocated in the hourly fell  
And many-arter'd fleece of throat and  
chin

But Vivian, gathering somewhat of his  
mood,  
And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or  
thrice

I leap'd from her session on his lap, and  
stood

Stiff as a viper frozen, loathsome sight,  
Flow from the rosy lips of life and love,  
Flash'd the bare-gnawing skeleton of  
death'

White was her cheek, sharp breaths of  
anger puff'd

Her fairy nostril out, her hand half-  
clench'd

Went flitting sideways downward to her  
belt,

And feeling, and she found a dagger  
there

(For in a wink the false love turns to  
hate)

She would have stab'd him, but she  
found it not

His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
A long, long weeping, not consolable  
Then her false voice made way, broken  
with sobs

'O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange.  
Or seeming shameful—for what shame in  
love,

So love be true, and not as yours is—  
nothing

Poor Vivian had not done to win his trust



Who call'd her what he call'd her—all  
her crime,  
All—all—the wish to prove him wholly  
hers'

She mused a little, and then clapt her  
hands  
Together with a wailing shriek, and said  
'Stabb'd through the heart's affections to  
the heart!

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
milk!

Kill'd with a word worse than a life of  
blows!

I thought that he was gentle, being great  
O God, that I had loved a smaller man!  
I should have found in him a greater  
heart.

O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the King, dark  
in your light,

Who loved to make men darker than they  
are,

Because of that high pleasure which I  
had

To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
Of worship—I am answer'd, and hence  
forth

The course of life that seem'd so flowery  
to me

With you for guide and master, only you,  
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
short,

And ending in a ruin—nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and  
there,

If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with mutterable unkindness'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung  
her head,

The snake of gold slid from her hair, the  
braid—

Slit and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward  
the storm

In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
For ease of heart, and half believed her  
true

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
'Come from the storm,' and having no  
reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the  
face

Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or  
shame,

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching  
terms,

To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in  
vain

At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cingeling newly flown returns,  
The seeming injured simple hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled  
there

There while she sat, half-falling from his  
knees,

Half nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her closed eye-  
lid yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm  
But she dislunk'd herself at once and rose,  
Her arms upon her breast across, and  
stood,

A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him then she  
said

'There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore,  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
What should be granted which your own  
gross heart

Would reckon worth the taking? I will  
go

In truth, but one thing now—better have  
died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could  
make me stay—

That proof of trust—so often ask'd in  
vain'

How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
I find with grief! I might believe you  
then,

Who knows? once more Lo! what was  
once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life

Farewell, think gently of me, for I fear  
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love thee still  
But ere I leave thee let me swear once  
more

That if I schemed against thy peace in  
this,

May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er  
me, send

One flash, that, missing all things else,  
may make

My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
heaven a bolt  
(For now the storm was close above them)  
struck,

Furrowing a grant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of the  
wood

The dark earth round He raised his  
eyes and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro' the  
gloom

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her  
oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks  
and claps

That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd  
him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her  
fright,

Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd  
him close

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
Took gayer colours, like an opal warm'd  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
tales

She shook from fear, and for her fault  
she wept

Of petulancy, she call'd him lord and  
liege,

Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate  
love

Of her whole life, and ever overhead

Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them; and in change of glare and  
gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
came,

Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
spent,

Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet once  
more

To perice, and what should not have been  
had been,

For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and  
slept

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
the charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and  
fame

Then crying 'I have made his glory  
mine,'  
And shrieking out 'O fool!' the harlot  
leapt

Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool'

## // LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
Elaine, the hily maid of Astolat,  
Ugh in her chamber up a tower to the  
east

Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot,  
Which first she placed where morning's  
earliest ray

Might strike it, and awake her with the  
gleam,

Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,

Leaving her household and good father,  
 clumb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd  
 her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked  
 shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
 arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made  
 upon it,  
 Conjecturing when and where this cut  
 is fresh,  
 That ten years back, this dealt him at  
 Caerlyle,  
 That at Caerleon, this at Camelot  
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was  
 there!  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,  
 but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
 enemy down,  
 And saved him so she lived in fantasy

How came the lily maid by that good  
 shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his  
 name?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond  
 jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that  
 name  
 Had named them, since a diamond was  
 the prize

For Arthur, long before they crown'd  
 him King,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black  
 tarn  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain  
 side  
 For here two brothers, one a king, had  
 met  
 And fought together, but their names  
 were lost,  
 And each had slain his brother at a blow,

And down they fell and made the glen  
 abhorrd  
 And there they lay till all their bones  
 were bleach'd,  
 And lichen'd into colour with the crags  
 And he, that once was king, had on a  
 crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the  
 pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and  
 the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull  
 the crown  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn  
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged,  
 and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt  
 be King'

Thereafter, when a King, he had the  
 gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them  
 to his knights,  
 Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I  
 chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the  
 King's—  
 For public use henceforward let there be  
 Once every year, a joust for one of these  
 For so by nine years' proof we need  
 must learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselve  
 shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule  
 the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder' Thus he  
 spoke  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had  
 been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
 year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
 Queen,  
 When all were won, but meaning all at  
 once

To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken  
word

Now for the central diamond and the  
last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
court  
Hard on the river nigh the place which  
now

Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guine-  
vere,

'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot  
move

To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she  
said, 'ye know it'

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the  
great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight ye love to look on' And the  
Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the  
King

He thinking that he read her meaning  
there,

'Stay with me, I am sick, my love is  
more

Than many diamonds,' yielded, and a  
heart

Love loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make  
complete

The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth,  
and say,

'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly  
whole,

And lets me from the saddle,' and the  
King

Glanced first at him, then her, and went  
his way

No sooner gone than suddenly she began

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
much to blame!

Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the  
knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the  
crowd

Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones,  
who take

Their pastime now the trustful King is  
gone!"

Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain  
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved  
me first

Then of the crowd ye took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade  
of grass,

And every voice is nothing As to  
knights,

Them surely can I silence with all ease  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-  
vere,

The pearl of beauty and our knights at  
feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the  
King

Would listen smiling How then? is  
there more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would  
yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?

She broke into a little scornful laugh  
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless  
King,

That passionate perfection, my good  
lord—

But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me only here to day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with  
him—else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself but, friend  
to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all  
For who loves me must have a touch of  
earth,

The lousun makes the colour I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the  
bond

And therefore hear my words go to the  
jousts

The tiny trumpeting gnat can break our  
dream

Whensweetest, and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but  
they sting'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights

'And with what face, after my pretext  
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honours his own  
word,

As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,

'A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at  
a touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot, your great  
name,

This conquers hide it therefore; go  
unknown

Win! by this kiss you will and our true  
King

Will then allow your pretext, O my  
knight,

As all for glory, for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek so'er he  
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes  
He loves it in his knights more than  
himself

They prove to him his work • win and  
return'

Thengot Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself } Not willing to be  
known,

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,

Chose the green path that show'd the  
rarer foot,

And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
Till as he traced a faintly shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the  
dales

Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the  
towers

Thither he made, and blew the gateway  
horn

Then came an old, dumb, myriad  
wrinkled man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd  
And Lancelot marvel'd at the wordless  
man;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir  
Lavune,

Moving to meet him in the castle court,  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter mother of the house  
There was not some light jest among  
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great  
knight

Approach'd them then the Lord of  
Astolat

'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by  
what name

Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of  
those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen the rest, his Table  
Round.

Known as they are, to me they are un  
known'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights

'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and  
known,

What I by mere mischance have brought,  
my shield

But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not  
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the  
shield—

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not  
mune'

Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here  
is Torre's

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank  
enough

His ye can have' Then added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have  
it'

Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie, Sir  
Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight?

Allow him' but Lavaine, my younger  
here,

He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an  
hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before'

'Nay, father, nay good father, shame  
me not

Before this noble knight,' said young  
Lavaine,

'For nothing Surely I but play'd on  
Torre

He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go.  
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden  
dreamt

That some one put this diamond in her  
hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike, and then I said  
That if I went and if I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safer All was  
jest

But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win,  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd  
Lancelot,

Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship

O'er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,

Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend

And you shall win this diamond,—as I  
hear

It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple  
maids'

Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,

Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement

Before the stranger knight, who, looking  
at her,

Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd  
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,

And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem  
this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like'

He spoke and ceased the lily maid  
Elaine,

Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments

The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,

In battle with the love he bare his lord  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere  
his time

Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the  
world,

Had been the sleeker for it but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose

And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest  
man

That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.

Howe'er marr'd, of more than twice her  
years,

Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the  
cneel,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up  
her eyes  
And loved him, with that love which was  
her doom

Then the great knight, the darling of  
the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half  
disdain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind  
Whom they with meats and vintage of  
their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd  
And much they ask'd of court and Table  
Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at  
Guinevere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years  
before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his  
tongue

'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce  
design

Against my house, and him they caught  
and mam'd,

But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among  
the woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur  
broke

The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine  
said, rapt

By all the sweet and sudden passion of  
youth

Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have  
fought

O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars' And Lancelot  
spoke

And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all daylong  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent  
Glem;

And in the four loud battles by the shore  
Of Duglas, that on Bassa, then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy  
skirts

Of Celidon the forest, and again  
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious  
King

Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he  
breathed;

And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild  
white Horse

Set every gilded parapet shuddering,  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath  
Trerout,

Where many a heathen fell, 'and on the  
mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them, and I saw him, after,  
stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to  
plume

Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
'They are broken, they are broken'  
for the King,

However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
jousts—

For if his own knight cast him down, he  
laughs

Saying, his knights are better men than  
he—

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him I never saw his like there lives  
No greater leader'

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
'Save your great self, fair lord,' and  
when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living  
smile





Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—  
Paused by the gateway, standing near  
the shield

In silence, while she watch'd their arms  
far-off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs  
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took  
the shield,

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy

Meanwhile the new companions past  
away

Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived  
a knight

Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
A hermit, who had pry'd, labour'd and  
pry'd,

And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
In the white rock a chapel and a hall

On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
And celis and chambers all were fur  
and dry,

The green light from the meadows under-  
neath

Struck up and lived along the milky roofs,  
And in the meadows tremulous aspen trees

And poplars made a noise of falling  
showers

And thither wending there that night they  
bode

But when the next day broke from  
underground,

And shot red fire and shadows thro' the  
cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
rode away

Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold  
my name

Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
Lake,'

Abash'd Lorraine, whose instant rever-  
ence,

Dearer to true young hearts than their  
own praise,

But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it  
indeed?'

And after muttering 'The great Lancelot'

At last he got his breath and answer'd,  
'One,

One have I seen—that other, our liege  
lord,

The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of  
kings,

Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there—then were I stricken  
blind

That minute, I might say that I had seen

So spake Lorraine, and when they  
reach'd the lists

By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half  
round

Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
Until they found the clear-faced King,  
who sat

Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
Since to his crown the golden oragon  
clung,

And down his robe the dragon writhed  
in gold,

And from the carven-work behind him  
crept

Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
make

Arms for his chair, while all the rest of  
them

Thro' knots and loops and folds innu-  
merable

Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
found

The new design wherein they lost them  
selves,

Yet with all ease, so tender was the work  
And, in the costly canopy, o'er him set,

Blazed the last diamond of the nameless  
king

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lorraine  
and said,

'Me you call great mine is the firmer  
seat,

The truer lance but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am

And overcome it, and in me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch

Of greatness to know well I am not great

There is the man ' And Lavaine gaped  
upon him  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew, and then did either  
side,  
They that assail'd, and they that held the  
lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well  
perceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder  
of arms  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd  
into it  
Against the stronger little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,  
earl,  
Count, baron—whom he smote, he over-  
threw

But in the field were Lancelot's kith  
and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held  
the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger  
knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot, and one said to the other,  
'Lo!  
What is he? I do not mean the force  
alone—  
The grace and versatility of the man!  
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot  
worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him,  
know'  
'How then? who then?' a fury seized  
them all,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their  
steeds, and thus,  
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind  
they made  
In moving, all together down upon him

Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the  
skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a  
spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the  
head  
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
and remain'd

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-  
shipfully,  
He bore a knight of old repute to the  
earth,  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where  
he lay  
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet  
endure,  
And being lustily helpen by the rest,  
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his kith  
and kin,  
And all the Table Round that held the  
lists,  
Back to the barner; then the trumpets  
blew  
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the  
sleeve  
Of scarlet, and the pearls, and all the  
knights,  
His party, cried 'Advance and take thy  
prize  
The diamond,' but he answer'd, 'Diamond  
me  
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow  
me not'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from  
the field  
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove  
There from his charger down he slid, and  
sat,

Gasp'ing to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head'

'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die'

But he, 'I die already with it draw—Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away

Then came the hermit out and bare him in,

There stanch'd his wound, and there, in duly doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a week Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove

Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,

Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,

'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,

Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize

Untaken, crying that his prize is death'

'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,

So great a knight as we have seen to-day—

He seem'd to me another Lancelot—

Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—

He must not pass uncared for Wherefore, rise,

O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight

Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given'

His prowess was too wondrous We will do him

No customary honour since the knight Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after Rise and take This diamond, and deliver it, and return,

And bring us where he is, and how he fares,

And cease not from your quest until ye find'

So saying, from the carven flower above, To which it made a restless heart, he took,

And gave, the diamond then from where he sat

At Arthur's right, with smiling face rose, With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince

In the mid might and flourish of his May, Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair

and strong,

And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Gerunt

And Gareth, a good knight, but there withal

Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot, Nor often loyal to his word, and now

Wroth that the King's command to sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave

The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings

So all in wrath he got to horse and went,

While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,

Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who hath come

Despite the wound he spoke of, all for gain

Of glory, and hath added wound to wound, And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd the King,

And, after two days' tarrance there,  
return'd  
Then when he saw the Queen, embrac-  
ing ask'd,  
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,  
lord,' she said  
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the  
Queen smil'd,  
'Was he not with you? won he not your  
prize?'  
'Nay, but one like him' 'Why that like  
was he'  
And when the King demanded how she  
learn'd,  
Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common  
talk  
That men went down before his spear at  
a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great  
name  
Conquer'd, and therefore would he hide  
his name  
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this  
end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering  
wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and  
learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd,  
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he  
learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory "'

Then replied the King  
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he hath trusted  
thee  
Surely his King and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret True,  
indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter  
now remains  
But little cause for laughter his own  
kin—

Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,  
this —  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon  
him,  
So that he went sore wounded from the  
field.  
Yet good news too for goodly hopes are  
mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broder'd with great  
pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that,  
she choked,  
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
Past to her chamber, and there flung  
herself  
Down on the great King's couch, and  
writhed upon it,  
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the  
palm,  
And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the un-  
hearing wall,  
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
again,  
And moved about her palace, proud and  
pale

Gawaun the while thro' all the region  
round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
quest,  
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar  
grove,  
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat  
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the  
maid  
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from  
Camelot, lord?  
What of the knight with the red sleeve?  
'He won'  
'I knew it,' she said 'But parted from  
the jousts  
Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her  
breath,  
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp  
lance go,

Thereon she smote her hand wellnigh  
 she swoon'd  
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,  
 came  
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
 Prince  
 Reported who he was, and on what quest  
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not  
 find  
 The victor, but had ridd'n a random  
 round  
 To seek him, and had wearied of the  
 search  
 To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide with  
 us,  
 And ride no more at random, noble  
 Prince'  
 Here was the knight, and here he left a  
 shield,  
 This will he send or come for further-  
 more  
 Our son is with him, we shall hear anon,  
 Needs must we hear' To this the cour-  
 teous Prince  
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
 And stay'd, and cast his eyes on fair  
 Elaine  
 Where could be found face daintier? then  
 her shape  
 From forehead down to foot, perfect—  
 again  
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd  
 'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for  
 me!'  
 And oft they met among the garden yews,  
 And there he set himself to play upon her  
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a  
 heigh  
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden elo-  
 quence  
 And amorous adulation, till the maid  
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him, 'Prince,  
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
 Whence you might learn his name? Why  
 slight your King,  
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and  
 prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
 Who lost the hern we slapt her at, and  
 went  
 To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine  
 head,' said he,  
 'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes,  
 But an ye will it let me see the shield'  
 And when the shield was brought, and  
 Gawain saw  
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with  
 gold,  
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
 and mock'd  
 'Right was the King! our Lancelot!  
 that true man!'  
 'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily,  
 'I,  
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
 knight of all'  
 'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that  
 you love  
 This greatest knight, your pardon I lo,  
 ye know it'  
 Speak therefore shall I waste myself in  
 vain?'  
 Full simple was her answer, 'What know  
 I?  
 My brethren have been all my fellow  
 ship,  
 And I, when often they have talk'd of  
 love,  
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they  
 talk'd,  
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so  
 myself—  
 I know not if I know what true love is,  
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
 I know there is none other I can love.'  
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love  
 him well,  
 But would not, knew ye what all others  
 know,  
 And whom he loves' 'So be it,' cried  
 Elaine,  
 And lifted her fair face and moved away  
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a  
 little'  
 One golden minute's grace! he wore  
 your sleeve.

Would he break faith with one I may not  
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at  
last?

Nay—like enow why then, far be it  
from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his  
loves'

And, damsel, for I deem you know full  
well

Where your great knight is hidden, let  
me leave

My quest with you, the diamond also  
here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it,  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand, and whether he  
love or not,

A diamond is a diamond Fare you well  
A thousand times '—a thousand times  
farewell'

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we  
two

May meet at court hereafter there, I  
think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the  
court,

We two shall know each other'

Then he gave,

And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he  
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the  
quest

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he  
went

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away

Thence to the court he past, there told  
the King

What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is  
the knight'

And added, 'Sire, my hege, so much I  
learnt,

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all  
round

The region but I lighted on the maid  
Whose sleeve he wore, she loves him,  
and to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond she will render it,  
For by mine head she knows his hiding  
place'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,  
and replied,

'Too courteous truly' ye shall go no more  
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings'

He spake and parted Wroth, but all  
in awe,

For twenty strokes of the blood, without  
a word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him,  
Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
buzz'd abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love  
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues  
were loosed

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance  
lot,

Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat'  
Some read the King's face, some the  
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but  
most

Predoom'd her as unworthy One old  
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
sharp news

She, that had heard the noise of it  
before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-  
quillity

So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder  
flared

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or  
thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the  
Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smiled at each other, while the Queen,  
who sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet  
unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out agunst the  
 floor  
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats  
 became  
 As wormwood, and she hated all who  
 pledged

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
 The one day-seen Sir Lancelot in her  
 heart,  
 Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face  
 and said,  
 'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and  
 now,  
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my  
 wits?'  
 'Nay,' said he, 'surely' 'Wherefore,  
 let me hence,'  
 She answer'd, 'and find out our dear  
 Lavanae'  
 'Ye will not lose your wits for dear  
 Lavanae  
 Bide,' answer'd he 'we needs must hear  
 anon  
 Of him, and of that other' 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
 And with mine own hand give his diamond  
 to him,  
 Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
 As yon proud Prince who left the quest  
 to me  
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Death pale, for lack of gentle maiden's  
 aid  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more  
 bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know  
 When these have worn their tokens let  
 me hence  
 I pray you' Then her father nodding  
 said,  
 'Ay, ay, the diamond wit ye well, my  
 child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight  
 were whole,  
 Being our greatest yea, and you must  
 give it—  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too  
 high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a  
 queen's—  
 Nay, I mean nothing so then, get you  
 gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
 And while she made her ready for her  
 ride,  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her  
 ear,  
 'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
 And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
 'Being so very wilful you must die'  
 But she was happy enough and shook it  
 off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us,  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
 'What matter, so I help him back to life?  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for  
 guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a rovin horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers  
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavanae,' she  
 cried, 'Lavanae,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He  
 amazed,  
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir  
 Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lance  
 lot?'  
 But when the maid had told him all her  
 tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his  
 moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-statued  
 gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd  
 mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,

His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot,  
And her, Lavune across the poplar grove  
Led to the caves there first she saw the casque  
Of Lancelot on the wall her scarlet sleeve,  
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
Stream'd from it still, and in her heart she hush'd,  
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
But merit once more perchance to tourney in it  
And when they gun'd the cell wherein he slept,  
His battle-worn arms and mighty hands lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
Of dragging down his enemy made them move  
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry  
The sound not wonted in a place so still  
Woke the sick night, and while he roll'd his eyes  
Yet blink from sleep, she started to him, saying,  
'Your prize the diamond sent you by the King'  
His eyes glisten'd she fancied 'Is it for me?'  
And when the maid had told him all the tale  
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
And laid the diamond in his open hand  
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face  
At once she slept like water to the floor  
'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you  
Rest must you have' 'No rest for me,' she said,

'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest'  
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,  
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,  
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
In the heart's colours on her simple face,  
And Lancelot look'd and was perplex'd in mind,  
And being weak in body said no more,  
But did not love the colour, woman's love,  
Saw one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,  
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates  
Far up the dim rich city to her kin,  
There bode the night but woke with dawn, and past  
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
Thence to the cave so dry by day she past  
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
And likewise many a night and Lancelot  
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt  
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
Brun-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
Uncourteous, even he but the meek maid  
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
Did kinder unto man, but her deep love  
Upbore her, till the hermit, skill'd in all  
The simples and the science of that time,  
Told him that her fine care had saved his life  
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,  
Would listen for her coming and regret



Her paring step, and held her tenderly,  
And loved her with all love except the  
love

Of man and woman when they love their  
best,

Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake  
And peradventure had he seen her first  
She might have made this and that other  
world

Another world for the sick man, but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd  
him,

His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-  
ness made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve  
These, as but born of sickness, could not  
live

For when the blood ran lustier in him  
again,

Full often the bright image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
grace

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd  
not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew right  
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what  
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd  
her sight,

And drove her ere her time across the  
fields

Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain it cannot  
be

He will not love me how then? must  
I die?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few  
notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid

Went half the night repeating, 'Must I  
die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to  
left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest,  
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,

'death or him,'  
Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt  
was whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet  
self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd  
her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
thought

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall'

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of  
him

For her own self or hers, 'and do not  
shun

To speak the wish most near to your true  
heart,

Such service have ye done me, that I make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord  
am I

In mine own land, and what I will I can'  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,

But like a ghost without the power to  
speak

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her  
wish,

And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it, and one morn it

chanced  
He found her in among the garden yews,

And said, 'Dely no longer, speak your  
wish,

Seeing I go to day ' then out she brake  
'Going? and we shall never see you more.

And I must die for want of one bold word' (1)  
'Speak that I live to hear,' he said, 'is

yours'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke  
'I have gone mad I love you let me  
die'

'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'  
 And innocently extending her white arms,  
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to be your wife'  
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,  
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine  
 But now there never will be wife of mine'  
 'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,  
 But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world'  
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the world, the world,  
 All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
 To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,  
 And your good father's kindness.' And she said,  
 'Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
 Alas for me then, my good days are done'  
 'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay'  
 This is not love but love's first flash in youth,  
 Most common yet, I know it of mine own self—  
 And you yourself will smile at your own self  
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age  
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
 More specially should your good knight be poor,  
 Endow you with broad land and territory  
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
 So that would make you happy further more,  
 Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight  
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
 And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke  
 She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale  
 Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied  
 'Of all this will I nothing,' and so fell,  
 And thus they bore her swooning to her tower

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of jew  
 Their talk had pierced, her father 'Ay, a flash,  
 I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead  
 Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot  
 I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
 To blunt or break her passion'

Lancelot said,  
 'That were against me what I can I will,'  
 And there that day remain'd, and toward even  
 Sent for his shield full meekly rose the maid,  
 Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield,  
 Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
 Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd  
 Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone  
 And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound,  
 And she by tact of love was well aware  
 That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him  
 And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,  
 Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away  
 This was the one discourtesy that he used

So in her tower alone the maiden sat  
 His very shield was gone, only the case,  
 Her own poor work, her empty labour left.

But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured  
wall

Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted  
quietly

Then came her brethren saying, 'Perce  
to thee,  
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all  
calm

But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant  
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd,  
the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she  
mirt

Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind

And in those days she made a little  
song,

And call'd her song 'The Song of Love  
and Death,'

And sang it sweetly could she make  
and sing

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain,  
in vain,

And sweet is death who puts an end to  
pain

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter  
death must be

Love, thou art bitter, sweet is death to  
me

O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die

'Sweet love, that seems not made to  
fade away,

Sweet death, that seems to make us love-  
less clay,

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I

'I fain would follow love, if that could  
be,

I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me,

Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice,  
and this,

All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard  
and thought

With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of  
the house

That ever shrieks before a death,' and  
call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light  
of dawn

Flared on her face, she shrieling, 'Let  
me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we  
I now,

Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and  
thought

'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and  
lay,

Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes

At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yester  
night

I seem'd a curious little mud again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the  
woods,

And when ye used to take me with the  
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it there ye sat  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide

And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King  
And yet ye would not, but this night I  
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have my  
will"

And there I woke, but still the wish  
remain'd

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King

There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at  
me;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at  
me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse  
at me;  
Gawain, who had a thousand farewells to  
me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bid me  
one.  
And there the King will know me and  
my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest!

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child,  
ye seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to  
go  
So far, being sick? and wherefore would  
ye lool'  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns  
us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to heave  
and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobls and say,  
I never loved him an I meet with  
him,  
I care not how soever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him  
down,  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him  
dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the  
house.'

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be  
wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the  
highest'

'Highest?' the father answered, echoing  
'highest?'  
(He meant to break the passion in her)  
'nay,

Daughter, I know not what you call the  
highest,  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If thus be high what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat -  
'Sweet father, all too frunt and sick am I  
For anger these are slanders never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk  
He makes no friend who never made a foe  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain so let me  
pass,

My father, how soe'er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
And greatest tho' my love had no return  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own  
desire,

For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner, wherefore  
cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and  
die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and  
gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavinie to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word, and when he  
ask'd

'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,  
'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the  
world,

But I myself must bear it' Then he wrote  
The letter she devised, which being writ  
And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and  
true,

Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest by the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it, I shall guard it even in death  
And when the heat is gone from out my  
heart,

Then take the little bed on which I died

For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the  
Queen's

For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a burge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen  
There surely I shall speak for mine own  
self,

And none of you can speak for me so well  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the  
doors'

She ceased her father promised,  
whereupon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her  
death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the  
eleventh  
Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she died  
So that day there was dole in Astolat

But when the next sun brake from  
underground,  
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent  
brows  
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that  
shone  
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the  
barge,  
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay  
Therestat the lifelong creature of the house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face  
So those two brethren from the chariot took  
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to  
her  
'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again  
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the  
dead,

Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with  
the flood—

In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming  
down—

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in  
white

All but her face, and that clear featured  
face

Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
craved

Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and  
b'low,

With deaths of others, and almost his  
own,

The nine-years fought-for diamonds for  
he saw

One of her house, and sent him to the  
Queen

Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
agreed

With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but  
that he,

Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her  
feet

For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
walls,

And parted, laughing in his courtly heart

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the  
stream,

They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd,  
'Queen,

Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making  
them

An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the  
swan's

Is tawnier than her cygnet's - these are words

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears Such sin  
in words

Perchance, we both can pardon but, my Queen,

I hear of rumours flying thro' your court  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,

Should have in it an absolute trust  
To make up that defect let rumours be  
When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust

That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,  
the Queen

Brake from the vast oriel embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,

Till all the place whereon she stood was green,

Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand

Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied

'It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake

Our bond is not the bond of man and wife  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier I for you  
This many a year have done despite and wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler What are these?

Diamonds for me? they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy Only this  
Grant me, I pray you have your joys  
apart

I doubt not that however changed, you keep

So much of what is graceful and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule

So cannot speak my mind An end to this!

A strange one! yet I take it with Amen  
So pry you, add my diamonds to her pearls,

Deck her with these, tell her, she shines  
me down

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's

Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
Q as much fairer—as a faith once fur  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers  
not mine—

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—

She shall not have them'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide  
for heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past away

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain

At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right across

Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst  
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,

On to the palace doorway sliding, paused

There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
door, to whom,  
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes  
that ask'd

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard  
face,

As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and  
they said,

'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen,  
so fair !

Yea, but how pale ! what are they ? flesh  
and blood ?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland ?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into Fairyland '

While thus they babbled of the King,  
the King  
Came girt with knights then turn'd the  
tongueless man  
From the half-face to the full eye, and  
rose

And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the mud,  
And reverently they bore her into hall  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd  
at her,

And Lancelot later came and mused at  
her,

And last the Queen herself, and pitied  
her

But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it,  
this was all

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake,

I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my  
death

And therefore to our Lady Guinevere

And to all other ladies, I make moan:  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless '

Thus he read;  
And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who  
read

To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that  
her lips,

Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them  
all

'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that  
hear,

Know that for this most gentle maiden's  
death

Right heavy am I, for good she was and  
true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I  
gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and  
use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature. what I could, I did  
I left her and I bid her no farewell,  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would  
have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough  
use,

And help'd her from herself '

Then said the Queen  
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after  
storm)

'Ye might at least have done her so  
much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from  
her death '

He raised his head, their eyes met and  
hers fell,

He adding,  
 'Queen, she would not be content  
 Save that I wedded her, which could not  
 be  
 Then might she follow me thro' the world,  
 she ask'd,  
 It could not be I told her that her love  
 Was but the flush of youth, would darken  
 down  
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
 Toward one more worthy of her—then  
 would I,  
 More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
 Estate them with large land and territory  
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow  
 seas,  
 To keep them in all joyance more than  
 this  
 I could not; thus she would not, and she  
 died'

He praising, Arthur answer'd, 'O my  
 knight,  
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
 To see that she be buried worshipfully'

So toward that shrine which then in  
 all the realm  
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
 The marshall'd Order of their Table  
 Round,

And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
 Nor meekly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
 And mass, and rolling music, like a queen  
 And when the knights had laid her comely  
 head

Low in the dust of half forgotten kings,  
 Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let  
 her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand  
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
 In letters gold and azure' which was  
 wrought

Therewith; but when now the lords and  
 dames

And people, from the high door stream-  
 ing, brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved  
 apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,  
 'Lancelot,

Forgive me, mine was jealousy in love  
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
 'That is love's curse, pass on, my Queen,  
 'forgiven'

But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
 Approach'd him, and with full affection  
 said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom  
 I have

Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
 What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
 And many a time have watch'd thee at  
 the tilt

Strike down the lusty and long practised  
 knight,

And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
 To win his honour and to make his name,  
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
 Made to be loved, but now I would to  
 God,

Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
 shap'd, it seems,

By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
 If one may judge the living by the dead,  
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
 Who might have brought thee, now a  
 lonely man

Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the  
 Lake'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she was,  
 my King,

Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be  
 To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
 To doubt her pureness were to want a  
 heart—

Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be  
bound.



'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said  
the King  
'Let love be free, free love is for the  
best  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She ful'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
he went,  
And at the munning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her  
moving down,  
Far off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself, 'Ah simple heart and  
sweet,  
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's Pray for  
thy soul?  
Ay, that will I Farewell too—now at  
last—  
Farewell, fair lily "Jealousy in love?"  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous  
pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and  
fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to  
me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms—the  
wondrous one  
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
morn  
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair,  
my child,  
As a king's son," and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er  
it be!

For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and  
have it

Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me but what use in  
it?

To make men worse by making my sin  
known?

Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must  
breath

These bonds that so defame me not  
without

She wills it—would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then  
may God,

I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten  
mere,

Among the tumbled fragments of the  
hills.'

So grown'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man

## THE HOLY GRAIL.

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess  
done

In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd  
The Pure,

Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for  
the cowl

The helmet in an abbey far away  
From Camelot, there, and not long after,  
died

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,  
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the  
rest,

And honour'd him, and wrought into his  
heart

A way by love that waken'd love within,  
To answer that which came and as they  
sat

Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half  
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
 That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke  
 Above them, ere the summer when he died,  
 The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale

'O brother, I have seen this yew tree smoke,  
 Spring after spring, for half a hundred years  
 For never have I known the world without,  
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale but thee,  
 When first thou camest—such a courtesy  
 Sprang thro' the limbs and in the voice—I knew  
 For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall,  
 For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
 Some true, some light, but every one of you  
 Stamp'd with the image of the King, and now  
 Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,  
 My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight, 'for no such passion mine  
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
 Drove me from all vanities, rivalries,  
 And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out  
 Among us in the jousts, while women watch  
 Who wins, who falls, and waste the spiritual strength  
 Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven'

To whom the monk 'The Holy Grail!—I trust  
 We are green in Heaven's eyes, but here too much  
 We moulder—as to things without I mean—  
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,  
 Told us of this in our refectory,

But sprang with such a sadness and so low  
 We heard not half of what he said What is it?  
 The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.  
 'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his own

This, from the blessed land of Aromat—  
 After the day of darkness, when the dead  
 Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good saint

Armathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
 To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord

And there awhile it bode, and if a man  
 Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,

By faith, of all his ills But then the times  
 Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
 Was caught away to Heaven, and disappeared'

To whom the monk 'From our old books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,  
 And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build,

And there he built with wattles from the marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,  
 For so they say, these books of ours, but seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read  
 But who first saw the holy thing to day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,

And one no further off in blood from me  
 Than sister, and if ever holy maid  
 With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
 A holy maid, tho' never maiden glow'd,  
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
 With such a fervent flame of human love,

Which being rudely blunted, glanced and  
shot

Only to holy things, to prayer and praise  
She gave herself, to fast and alms And  
yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
And the strange sound of an adulterous  
race,

Across the iron grating of her cell  
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the  
more

'And he to whom she told her sins, or  
what

Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
And each of these a hundred winters old,  
From our Lord's time And when King  
Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts  
became

Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come  
again,

But sin broke out Ah, Christ, that it  
would come,

And heal the world of all their wickedness!  
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might  
it come

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"  
said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as  
snow"

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and  
I thought

She might have risen and floated when I  
saw her

'For on a day she sent to speak with  
me.

And when she came to speak, behold her  
eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness

And "O my brother Percivale," she said,

"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
Grail

For, waked at dead of night, I heard a  
sound

As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's  
use

To hunt by moonlight,' and the slender  
sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch  
with hand,

Was like that music as it came, and then  
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver  
beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy  
Grail,

Rose red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
Till all the white walls of my cell were  
died

With rosy colours leaping on the wall,  
And then the music faded, and the Grail  
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the  
walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and  
pray,

And tell thy brother knights to fast and  
pray,

That so perchance the vision may be seen;  
By thee and those, and all the world be  
heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake  
of this

To all men, and myself fasted and  
pray'd

Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever  
moved

Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
"God make thee good as thou art beau-  
tiful,"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight,  
and none,

In so young youth, was ever made a knight  
 Till Galahad, and this Galahad, when  
 he heard  
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze,  
 His eyes became so like her own, they  
 seem'd  
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he, but  
 some  
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
 said  
 Begotten by enchantment—chatterers  
 they,  
 Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
 That gape for flies—we know not whence  
 they come;  
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly  
 lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore  
 awry  
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth  
 of hair  
 Which made a silken mat-work for her  
 feet,  
 And out of this she pla ted broad and long  
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver  
 thread  
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
 A crimson grail within a silver beam,  
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and  
 bound it on him,  
 Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight  
 of heaven,  
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with  
 mine,  
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my  
 belt  
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have  
 seen,  
 And break thro' all, till one will crown  
 thee king  
 Far in the spiritual city " and as she  
 spake  
 She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid  
 her mind  
 On him, and he believed in her belief

'Then came a year of miracle O  
 brother,  
 In our great hall there stood a vacant  
 chair,  
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
 And carven with strange figures, and in  
 and out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read  
 And Merlin call'd it "The Siege peril-  
 ous,"

Perilous for good and ill, "for there,"  
 he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose  
 himself "

And once by misadvertence Merlin sat  
 In his own chair, and so was lost, but he,  
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
 Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to  
 pass,  
 While the great banquet lay along the  
 hall,  
 That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's  
 chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we  
 heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
 And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry  
 And in the blast there smote along the hall  
 A beam of light seven times more clear  
 than day

And down the long beam stole the Holy  
 Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
 And none might see who bare it, and it  
 past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
 And staring each at other like dumb men  
 Stood, till I found a voice and swore a  
 vow

'I swear a vow before them all, that I,  
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would  
 ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun

My sister saw it, and Galahad sware the  
 vow,  
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,  
 sware,  
 And Lancelot sware, and many among  
 the knights,  
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the  
 rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, ask-  
 ing him,  
 'What said the King? Did Arthur take  
 the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,  
 'the King,

Was not in hall for early that same day,  
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
 Crying on help for all her shining hair  
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky  
 arm

Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all  
 she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
 In tempest so the King arose and went  
 To smoke the scandalous hive of those  
 wild bees

That made such honey in his realm  
 How best

Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
 Returning o'er the plain that then began  
 To darken under Camelot, whence the  
 King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!  
 the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder  
 smoke!

Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the  
 bolt"

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
 As having there so oft with all his knights  
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under  
 heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty  
 hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,

By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing  
 brook,  
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin  
 built

And four great zones of sculpture, set  
 betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall  
 And in the lowest bersts are slaying men,  
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
 And on the fourth are men with growing  
 wings,

And over all one statue in the mould  
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern  
 Star

And eastward fronts the statue, and the  
 crown

And both the wings are made of gold,  
 and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
 Behold it, crying, "We have still a King"

'And, brother, had you known our hall  
 within,

Broader and higher than any in all the  
 lands!

Where twelve great windows blazon  
 Arthur's wars,

And all the light that falls upon the board  
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of  
 our King

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount  
 and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
 And blank and who shall blazon it?

when and how?—

O there, perchance, when all our wars are  
 done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast away

'So to this hall full quickly rode the  
 King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,  
 wrapt

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.

And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all  
And many of those who burnt the hold,  
their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with  
smoke, and scar'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
Full of the vision, prest and then the  
King

Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"  
{Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
Vowing, and some protesting}, "what is  
this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had  
chanced,

My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be done  
in vain,

Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights,"  
he cried,

"Had I been here, ye had not sworn  
the vow "

Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself  
been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn "  
"Yea, yea," said he,

"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the  
Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I  
saw the light,

But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw "

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn  
our vows "

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye  
seen a cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in  
a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me '"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the  
King, "for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—  
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
A sign to maim this Order which I made  
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell "  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb will  
sing

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
Five knights at once, and every younger  
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Per-  
civales "

(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close

After Sir Galahad), "nay," said he,  
"but men

With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,  
Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the blind will  
see

Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my  
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come  
and go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering  
fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea  
most,

Return no more ye think I show myself

Too dark a prophet come now, let us  
meet  
The morrow morn once more in one full  
field  
Of gracious pastime, that once more the  
King,  
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may  
count  
The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,  
Rejoicing in that Order which he made "

'So when the sun broke next from  
under ground,  
All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,  
So many lances broken—never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur  
came,  
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their  
heat,  
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-  
vale!"

'But when the next day broke from  
under ground—  
O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
The King himself had fears that it would  
fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim, for where  
the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass, and lower, and  
where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the  
necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers  
of flowers  
Fell as we past, and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
At all the corners, named us each by  
name,  
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways  
below

The knights and ladies wept, and rich  
and poor  
Wept, and the King himself could hardly  
speak  
For grief, and all in middle street the  
Queen,  
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd  
aloud,  
"This madness has come on us for our  
sins"  
So to the Gate of the three Queens we  
came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mys-  
tically,  
And thence departed every one his way

'And I was lifted up in heart, and  
thought  
Of all my late shown prowess in the lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down  
the knights,  
So many and famous names, and never  
yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth  
so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I  
knew  
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our  
King,  
That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my  
mind.  
Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of  
old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee"  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death;  
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee"

'And on I rode, and when I thought  
my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then  
a brook,





“O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all,  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
‘Take thou my robe,’ she said, ‘for all  
is thine,’

And all her form shone forth with sudden  
light

So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow’d Him down, and like a flying  
star

Led on the gray-hair’d wisdom of the east;  
But her thou hast not known for what  
is this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy  
sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad” When the hermit made  
an end,

In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter’d, and we knelt in  
prayer

And there the hermit slaked my burning  
thirst,

And at the sacrificing of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone, but he,

“Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw  
the Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
shrine

I saw the fiery face as of a child  
That smote itself into the bread, and went,

And hither am I come; and never yet  
Hath what thy sister taught me first to  
see,

This Holy Thing, fail’d from my side, nor  
come

Cover’d, but moving with me night and  
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken’d  
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain  
top

Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
Blood-red And in the strength of this

I rode,  
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,

And past thro’ Pagan realms, and made  
them mine,

And clash’d with Pagan hordes, and bore  
them down,

And broke thro’ all, and in the strength  
of this

Come victor. But my time is hard at  
hand,

And hence I go; and one will crown me  
king

Far in the spiritual city, and come thou,  
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go

‘While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling  
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
grew

One with him, to believe as he believed.  
Then, when the day began to wane, we  
went

‘There rose a hill that none but man  
could climb,

Scarr’d with a hundred wintry water  
courses—

Storm at the top, and when we gain’d it,  
storm

Round us and death, for every moment  
glanced

His silver arms and gloom’d so quick  
and thick

The lightnings here and there to left and  
right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,  
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
Sprang into fire and at the base we found

On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten’d with the bones  
of men,

Not to be crost, save that some ancient  
king

Had built a way, where, link’d with  
many a bridge,

A thousand piers ran into the great Sea  
And Galahad fled along them bridge by  
bridge,

And every bridge as quickly as he crost



Made my heart leap, for when I moved  
of old

A slender page about her father's hall,  
And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
Went after her with longing yet we  
twain

Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
And all his land and wealth and state  
were hers

And while I tarried, every day she set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me, for all her longing and her will  
Was toward me as of old, till one fair  
morn,

I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard underneath  
Her castle walls, she stole upon my wall,  
And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first  
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to me  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,

That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart anon,  
The heads of all her people drew to me,  
With supplication both of knees and  
tongue

"We have heard of thee thou art our  
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe  
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land"  
O me, my brother! but one night my vow  
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own  
self,

And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her,  
Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
earth'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men, when  
yule is cold,

Must be content to sit by little fires  
And thus am I, so that ye care for me  
Ever so little, yea, and blest be Heaven

That brought thee here to this poor house  
of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
warm

My cold heart with a friend but O the  
pity

To find thine own first love once more—  
to hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine  
arms,

Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,  
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed  
For we that want the warmth of double  
life,

We that are plagued with dreams of  
something sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,

Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
But live like an old bridger in his earth,

With earth about him everywhere, despite'  
All fast and penance Saw ye none be  
side,

None of your nights?

'Yet so,' said Percivale

'One night my pathway swerving east, I  
saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
All in the middle of the rising moon

And toward him purr'd, and hail'd him,  
and he me,

And each made joy of either, then he  
ask'd,

"Where is he? hast thou seen him—  
Lancelot?—Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me  
—mad,

And maddening what he rode, and when  
I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!

I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
For now there is a lion in the way'

So vanish'd"

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,

Because his former madness, once the talk  
And scandal of our table, had return'd,



Then answer'd Percivale. 'And that  
can I,  
Brother, and truly, since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again,  
But sit within the house O, when we  
reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they  
trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cocka-  
trices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the  
stones  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to  
the hall

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of  
them,  
And those that had not, stood before the  
King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad  
me hail,  
Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings,  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of  
ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded for  
us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing, but now—  
the Quest,  
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-  
bury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast  
heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,  
ask'd  
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for  
thee?"

' "Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for  
such as I  
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me,  
For I was much aweared of the Quest  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then this  
gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort, yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant  
to me."

'He ceased, and Arthur turn'd to  
whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught  
his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail,"  
and Bors,  
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it  
I saw it," and the tears were in his eyes

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for  
the rest  
Spoke but of sundry perils in the storm;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last,  
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the  
King, "my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for  
thee?"

' "Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,  
with a groan,  
"O King!"—and when he paused,  
methought I spied  
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—  
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,  
Happier are those that welter in their sin,  
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
slime,  
Slime of the ditch but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure

Noble, and laugh'd in me turned end  
 clare;  
 Round that one can, untill the whole some  
 flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as  
 each,  
 Not to be pluck'd sunder and when thy  
 Iri, hi,  
 Swore, I was with them only, in the hope  
 That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
 They must be pluck'd sunder. Then I  
 spoke  
 To one most holy man, who wept and  
 said,  
 That saw they could be pluck'd sunder,  
 and  
 My quest were but in vain, to whom I  
 would  
 That I would work according as he will'd  
 And forth I went and while I yearn'd  
 and true  
 To tear the torn sunder in my heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far away,  
 There was I beaten down by little men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of  
 my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been enow  
 To scare them from me once; and then  
 I came  
 All in my folly to the naked shore,  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
 grass grew;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
 So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the blast.  
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the  
 sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded  
 heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the  
 sound  
 And blinding in the sea foam sway'd a  
 boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
 chain,  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my sin'

I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all the  
 stars,  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
 night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and looking  
 up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car  
 bonck,  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker! there  
 was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon was  
 full  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the  
 stairs  
 There drew my sword With sudden-  
 flashing minces  
 Those two great beasts rose upright like  
 a man,  
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood  
 between,  
 And, when I would have smitten them,  
 heard a voice,  
 'Doubt not, go forward, if thou doubt,  
 the beasts  
 Will tear thee piecemeal' Then with  
 violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my hand,  
 and fell  
 And up into the sounding hall I past;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
 No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded  
 moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea  
 But always in the quiet house I heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost  
 tower  
 To the eastward up I climb'd a thousand  
 steps  
 With pun as in a dream I seem'd to  
 climb  
 For ever at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard

'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail'  
Then in my madness I essay'd the door,  
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
away—

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
and eyes

And but for all my madness and my sin,  
And then my swooning, I had sworn I  
saw

That which I saw, but what I saw was  
veil'd

And cover'd, and this Quest was not for  
me "

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,  
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
words,—

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
Now bolden'd by the silence of his  
King,—

Well, I will tell thee "O King, my  
liege," he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of  
thine?

When have I stinted stroke in foughten  
field?

But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men  
mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than  
our least

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I  
swear,

I will be deafer than the blue eyed cat,  
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
Henceforward "

"Deafer," said the blameless King,

"Gawan, and blinder unto holy things  
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
Being too blind to have desire to see

But if indeed there came a sign from  
heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,  
For these have seen according to their  
sight

For every fiery prophet in old times,  
And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
When God made music thro' them, could  
but speak

His music by the framework and the  
chord,

And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot  
never yet

Could all of true and noble in knight and  
man

Twine round one sin, whatever it might  
be,

With such a closeness, but apart there  
grew,

Save that he were the swine thou spakest  
of,

Some root of knighthood and pure noble-  
ness,

Whereto see thou, that it may bear its  
flower

"And spake I not too truly, O my  
knights?

Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
That most of them would follow wan-  
dering fires,

Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and  
gone,

And left me gazing at a barren board,  
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a  
tithe—

And out of those to whom the vision came  
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;  
Another hath beheld it afar off,  
And leaving human wrongs to right them-  
selves,

Cares but to pass into the silent life  
And one hath had the vision face to  
face,

And now his chair desires him here in  
vain,

However they may crown him elsewhere.

"And some among you held, that if  
 the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn  
 the vow  
 Not easily, seeing that the King must  
 guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to  
 plow  
 Who may not wander from the allotted  
 field  
 Before his work be done, but, being done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the day  
 Come, as they will, and many a time  
 they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems not  
 earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not  
 light,  
 This air that smites his forehead is not air  
 But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—  
 In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
 And knows himself no vision to himself,  
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
 Who rose again ye have seen what ye  
 have seen."

'So spake the King I knew not all  
 he meant.'

### PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill  
 the gap  
 Left by the Holy Quest, and as he sat  
 In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a  
 youth,  
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
 Past, and the sunshine came along with  
 him

'Make me thy knight, because I know,  
 Sir King,  
 All that belongs to knighthood, and I love '  
 Such was his cry for having heard the  
 King  
 Had let proclaim a tournament—the prize  
 A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
 Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won

The golden circlet, for himself the sword  
 And there were those who knew him near  
 the King,  
 And promised for him and Arthur made  
 him knight

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the  
 isles—

But lately come to his inheritance,  
 And lord of many a barren isle was he  
 Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
 Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find  
 Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
 Beat like a strong knight on his helm,  
 and reel'd

Almost to falling from his horse; but  
 saw

Near him a mound of even-sloping side,  
 Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
 And here and there great hollies under  
 them,

But for a mile all round was open space,  
 And fern and heath and slowly Pelleas  
 drew

To that dim day, then binding his good  
 horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as he  
 lay

At random looking over the brown earth  
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the  
 grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without  
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it  
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
 Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
 Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes  
 closed

And since he loved all maidens, but no  
 maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
 'Where?'

O where? I love thee, tho' I know thee  
 not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
 And I will make thee with my spear and  
 sword

As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
 For I will be thine Arthur when we  
 meet.'



Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colours like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken  
stood

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and one  
that,  
Because the way was lost

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the  
light  
There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

'In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way  
To right? to left? straight forward? back  
again?

Which? tell us quickly'

Pelleas gazing thought,  
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'

For large her violet eyes look'd, and her  
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stunless heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in woman-  
hood,

And slender was her hand and small her  
shape,

And but for those large eyes, the haunts  
of scorn,

She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,  
And pass and care no more But while  
he gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul  
For as the base man, judging of the good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul to  
hers,

Believing her, and when she spake to  
him,  
Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
reply

For out of the waste islands had he come,  
Wheresoever his own sisters he had known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd  
against the gulls,  
Makers of nets, and living from the sea

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady  
round

And look'd upon her people, and as when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping turn,  
The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-  
pany

Three knights were there among, and they  
too smiled,

Scorning him, for the lady was Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land

Agun she said, 'O wild and of the  
woods,

Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech?

Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair  
face,

Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,  
'I woke from dreams, and coming out  
of gloom

Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
crave

Pardon but will ye to Caerleon? I  
Go likewise shall I lead you to the King?'

'Lead then,' she said, and thro' the  
woods they went

And while they rode, the meaning in his  
eyes,

His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,  
His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
heart

She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a fool,  
Raw, yet so stale!' But since her mind  
was bent

On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name

And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the lists  
Cried—and beholding him so strong, she  
thought

That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet therefore flatter'd  
him,

Being so gracious, that he wellnigh deem'd  
His wish by hers was echo'd, and her  
knights

And all her damsels too were gracious to  
him,

For she was a great lady

And when they reach'd  
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'  
she said,

'See! look at mine! but wilt thou fight  
for me,

And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart  
Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou if I  
win?'

'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and she  
laugh'd,

And straitly npt the hand, and flung it  
from her;

Then glanced askew at those three knights  
of hers,

Ti'l all her ladies laugh'd along with her

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas, 'all,  
meseems,

Are happy, I the happiest of them all'  
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
the leaves;

Then being on the morrow knighted,  
sware

To love one only And as he came away,  
The men who met him rounded on their  
heels

And wonder'd after him, because his face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest of  
old

Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kirdled by fire from heaven so glad  
was he

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and  
strange knights

From the four winds came in and each  
one sa',

Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
stream, and sea,

Of in mid-banquet measuring with his  
eyes

His neighbour's make and might. and  
Pelleas look'd

Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
His lady loved him, and he knew himself

Loved of the King and him his new-  
made knight

Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved  
him more

Than all the ranged reasons of the world

Then blush'd and brake the morning  
of the jousts,

And this was call'd 'The Tournament of  
Youth'

For Arthur loving his young knight,  
withheld

His older and his mightier from the lists,  
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,

According to her promise, and remain  
Lord of the tourney And Arthur had

the jousts  
Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk

Holden. the gilded parapets were crown'd  
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with

eyes  
Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew

There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the  
field

With honour so by that strong hand of  
his

The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved

Then rang the shout his lady loved.  
the heat

Of pride and glory fired her face, her eye  
Sparkled, she caught the circlet from his

lance,  
And there before the people crown'd  
herself

So for the last time she was gracious to  
him

Then at Caerleon for a space—her look  
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
 knight—  
 Linger'd Ettarre and seeing Pelleas  
 droop,  
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee  
 much,  
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
 To him who won thee glory ' And she  
 said,  
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your  
 bower,  
 My Queen, he had not won ' Whereat  
 the Queen,  
 As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went  
 her way

But after, when her damsels, and her-  
 self,  
 And those three knights all set their  
 faces home,  
 Sir Pelleas follow'd She that saw him  
 cried,  
 'Damsels—and yet I should be shamed  
 to say it—  
 I cannot bide Sir Baby Keep him back  
 Among yourselves. Would rather that  
 we had  
 Some rough old knight who knew the  
 worldly way,  
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
 And jest with take him to you, keep  
 him off,  
 And pamper him with pypmeat, if ye will,  
 Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell their  
 boys  
 Nay, should ye try him with a merry one  
 To find his mettle, good and if he fly  
 us,  
 Small matter ' let him ' This her  
 damsels heard,  
 And mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
 They, closing round him thro' the journey  
 home,  
 Acted her hest, and always from her side  
 Restrain'd him with all manner of device,  
 So that he could not come to speech  
 with her

And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang  
 the bridge,  
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
 groove,  
 And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas  
 thought,  
 'To those who love them trials of our  
 faith  
 Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
 For loyal to the uttermost am I '  
 So made his moan, and, darkness falling,  
 sought  
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
 rose  
 With morning every day, and, moist or  
 dry,  
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long  
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to  
 him

And this persistence turn'd her scorn  
 to wrath  
 Then calling her three knights, she  
 charged them, 'Out '  
 And drive him from the walls ' And out  
 they came,  
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they  
 dash'd  
 Against him one by one, and these  
 return'd,  
 But still he kept his watch beneath the  
 wall

Thereon her wrath became a hate;  
 and once,  
 A week beyond, while walking on the  
 walls  
 With her three knights, she pointed  
 downward, 'Look,  
 He haunts me—I cannot breathe—be-  
 sieges me;  
 Down ' strike him! put my hate into  
 your strokes,  
 And drive him from my walls ' And  
 down they went,  
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by one,  
 And from the tower above him cried  
 Ettarre,  
 'Bind him, and bring him in '

He heard her voice,  
Then let the strong hand, which had  
overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he over  
threw  
Be bounden straight, and so they brought  
him in

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one  
glance  
More bondsmen in his heart than in his  
bonds  
Yet with good cheer he spake, 'Behold  
me, Lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will,  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
Content am I so that I see thy free  
But once a day for I have sworn my  
vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and I  
know  
That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself, when thou hast seen me  
strain'd  
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy  
I might'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken  
mute,  
But when she mock'd his vows and the  
great King,  
Lighted on words 'For pity of thine  
own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace is he not thine and  
mine'  
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his  
voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him  
now,  
And thrust him out of doors, for save  
he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
He will return no more' And those, her  
three,  
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him  
from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
She call'd them, saying, 'There he  
watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's door'  
Kick'd, he returns do ye not hate him,  
ye?  
Ye know yourselves how can ye bide at  
peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
No men to strike? Fall on him all at  
once,  
And if ye slay him I reckon not if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds'

She spake, and at her will they couch'd  
their spears,  
Three against one and Gawain passing  
by,  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those  
towers  
A villany, three to one and thro' his  
heart  
The fire of honour and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy  
side—  
The cattiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but  
forbear,  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's will'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,  
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, with-  
held  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and  
kills

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
three,  
And they rose up, and bound, and brought  
him in  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
hound.

'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust him out,  
And let who will release him from his bonds  
And if he comes again'—there she brake short,  
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for indeed I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful, I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd Thro' evil spite and if ye love me not, I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn I had liefer ye were worthy of my love, Than to be loved again of you—farewell, And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love, Vex not yourself ye will not see me more'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and thought,  
Why have I push'd him from me? this man loves,  
If love there be yet him I loved not Why?  
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in him  
A something—was it nobler than myself?—  
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my kind  
He could not love me, did he know me well  
Nay, let him go—and quickly' And her knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out of door

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls, and afterward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou not—  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made  
Knight of his table, yea and he that won

The circlet? wherefore hast thou so defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
As let these cutiffs on thee work their will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery now,  
Other than when I found her in the woods,  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face,  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in scorn,  
'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will -  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine—Christ kill me then  
But I will slice him handless by the wrist,  
And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
Howl as he may But hold me for your friend.  
Come, ye know nothing - here I pledge my troth,  
Yea, by the honour of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say  
That I have slain thee. She will let me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall,  
Then, when I come within her counsels, then  
From prime to vespers will I chant thy praise  
As provest knight and truest lover, more  
Than any have sung thee living, till she long

To have thee back in lusty life again,  
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
 and warm,  
 Dearer than freedom Wherefore now  
 thy horse  
 And armour let me go be comforted  
 Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
 and hope  
 The thurd night hence will bring thee  
 news of gold'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his  
 arms,  
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and  
 took  
 Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but  
 help—  
 Art thou not he whom men call light-of-  
 love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so  
 light'  
 Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
 And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,  
 And winded it, and that so musically  
 That all the old echoes hidden in the  
 wall  
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-  
 tide

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower,  
 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee  
 not'

But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,  
 'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye  
 hate  
 Behold his horse and armour Open  
 gates,  
 And I will make you merry'

And down they ran,  
 Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo'  
 Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that hath  
 His horse and armour will ye let him in?  
 He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the  
 court,  
 Sir Gawain—there he waits below the  
 wall,  
 Blowing his bugle as who should say him  
 nay'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'  
 open door  
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-  
 teously  
 'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd 'Ay, ay,'  
 said he,  
 'And oft in dying cried upon your name'  
 'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good  
 knight,  
 But never let me bide one hour at peace'  
 'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair  
 enow  
 But I to your dead man have given my  
 troth,  
 That whom ye loathe, him will I make  
 you love'

So those three days, aimless about the  
 land,  
 Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
 Waited, until the thurd night brought a  
 moon  
 With promise of large light on woods and  
 ways

Hot was the night and silent, but a  
 sound  
 Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—  
 Which Pelleas had heard sung before the  
 Queen,  
 And seen her sadden listening—vext his  
 heart,  
 And marr'd his rest—'A worm within the  
 rose'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
 A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous  
 fair,  
 One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and  
 sky,  
 One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all  
 mine air—  
 I cared not for the thorns, the thorns  
 were there

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
 One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,  
 No rose but one—what other rose had I?  
 One rose, my rose, a rose that will not  
 die,—  
 He dies who loves it,—if the worm be  
 there'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the  
 doubt,  
 'Why lingers Gawain with his golden  
 news?'  
 So shook him that he could not rest, but  
 rode  
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his  
 horse  
 Hard by the gates      Wide open were the  
 gates,  
 And no watch kept, and in thro' these  
 he past,  
 And heard but his own steps, and his  
 own heart  
 Beating, for nothing moved but his own  
 self,  
 And his own shadow      Then he crost  
 the court,  
 And spied not any light in hall or bower,  
 But saw the postern portal also wide  
 Yawning, and up a slope of garden, all  
 Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt  
 And overgrowing them, went on, and  
 found,  
 Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
 moon,  
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
 Came lightening downward, and so spilt  
 itself  
 Among the roses, and was lost again

Then was he ware of three pavilions  
 rear'd  
 Above the bushes, gilden-peakt in one,  
 Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights  
 Slumbering, and their three squires across  
 their feet  
 In one, their malice on the placid lip  
 Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels  
 lay  
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
 Ettarre

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the  
 leaf  
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew  
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he  
 fears  
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound

Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
 again,  
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
 stood  
 There on the castle bridge once more, and  
 thought,  
 'I will go back, and slay them where they  
 lie'

And so went back, and seeing them yet  
 in sleep  
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
 sleep,  
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword,  
 and thought,  
 'What 'slay a sleeping knight? the King  
 hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood,'  
 again,  
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so  
 false'  
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groan-  
 ing laid  
 The naked sword athwart their naked  
 throats,  
 There left it, and them sleeping, and she  
 lay,  
 The circlet of the tourney round her  
 brows,  
 And the sword of the tourney across her  
 throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on  
 his horse  
 Stared at her towers that, larger than  
 themselves  
 In their own darkness, throng'd into the  
 moon  
 Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs,  
 and clench'd  
 His hands, and madden'd with himself  
 and moan'd.

'Would they have risen against me in  
 their blood  
 At the last day? I might have answer'd  
 them  
 Even before high God. O towers so  
 strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
 The crack of earthquake shivering to your  
 Love  
 Spun round and Hell burst up your harlot  
 roads  
 Hell's own, and charr'd you th'ro' and thro'  
 within,  
 Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a  
 still  
 Let the fierce cry scream thro' your eye  
 let holes,  
 And 'twixt the dust of harlots round and  
 to and  
 It came and rattle I hiss, snarl— I saw  
 him there—  
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who  
 yells  
 Here in the still sweet summer night, but  
 I—  
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her  
 fool?  
 Fool, bear—he, she, or I? myself mo't  
 fool—  
 Hear too, as beeling human wit—dis-  
 graced,  
 Disgraced all for trial of true love—  
 Love?—we be all alike—only the King  
 Hath made us fools and liars O noble  
 vows!  
 O great and sane and simple race of brutes  
 That own no lust because they have no  
 love!  
 For why should I have loved her to my  
 shame?  
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame  
 I re'er loved her, I but lusted for her—  
 Arr'y—'

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the  
 night

Then she, that felt the cold touch on  
 her throat,  
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
 herself  
 To Gráin· 'Liar, for thou hast not slain  
 This Pelleas! here he stood, and might  
 have slain  
 Me and thyself! And he that tells the tale

Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on  
 earth,  
 And only lover; and thro' her love her  
 life  
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain

But he by wild and way, for half the  
 night,  
 And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
 From out the soft, the spark from off the  
 hard,  
 Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
 Beside that tower where Percivale was  
 cowl'd,  
 Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
 dawn  
 I or so the words were flash'd into his  
 heart  
 He knew not whence or wherefore 'O  
 sweet star,  
 Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!  
 And there he would have wept, but felt  
 his eyes

Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
 In summer thither came the village girls  
 And linger'd talling, and they come no  
 more

Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from  
 the heights  
 Afun with living waters in the change  
 Of seasons hard his eyes, harder his  
 heart  
 Seem'd, but so weary were his limbs,  
 that he,  
 Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,  
 Here let me rest and die,' erst himself  
 down,

And gulfd his griefs in inmost sleep, so  
 hy,  
 Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
 The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
 Recl'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
 and fell

He woke, and being ware of some one  
 nigh,  
 Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
 crying,  
 'Falsel and I held thee pure as Guinevere!'



But Percivale stood near him and  
replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being  
one  
Of our free spoken Table hast not heard  
That Lancelot'—there he check'd him-  
self and paused

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with  
one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again,  
And pricks it deeper and he shrank and  
wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was  
mute  
'Have any of our Round Table held their  
vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said  
Percivale  
'Why then let men couple at once with  
wives  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
horse  
And fled small pity upon his horse had  
he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
A cripple, one that held a wand for alms—  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-  
elm  
That turns its back on the salt blast, the  
boy  
Paused not, but overrode him, shouting,  
'False,  
And false with Gawain!' and so left him  
bruised  
And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and  
wood  
Went ever streaming by him till the gloom,  
That follows on the turning of the world,  
Darken'd the common path he twitch'd  
the reins,  
And made his beast that better knew it,  
swerve

Now off it and now on, but when he saw  
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin  
built,  
Blackening against the dead-green stripes  
of even,  
'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build  
too high'

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
Warm with a gracious parting from the  
Queen,  
Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
And marvelling what it was on whom  
the boy,  
Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
Borne, clash'd and Lancelot, saying,  
'What name hast thou  
That ridest here so blindly and so  
hard?'  
'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a  
scourge am I  
To lash the treasons of the Table Round'  
'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many  
names,' he cried.  
'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil  
fame,  
And like a poisonous wind I pass to  
blast  
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the  
Queen'  
'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt  
thou pass'  
'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and  
either knight  
Drew back a space, and when they closed,  
at once  
The weary steed of Pelleas floundering  
flung  
His rider, who call'd out from the dark  
field,  
'Thou art false as Hell slay me I have  
no sword'  
Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—  
and sharp,  
But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be  
slain,'  
And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
fall'n,

Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then  
spake.  
'Rise, weakling, I am Lancelot, say thy  
say'

And Lancelot slowly rode his warhorse  
back  
To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while  
Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark  
field,  
And follow'd to the city It chanced that  
both  
Brake into hall together, worn and pale  
There with her knights and dames was  
Guinevere  
Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,  
him  
Who had not greeted her, but cast him-  
self  
Down on a bench, hard-breathing 'Have  
ye fought?'  
She ask'd of Lancelot 'Ay, my Queen,'  
he said  
'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay,  
my Queen'  
Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young  
knight,  
Hath the great heart of knighthood in  
thee fail'd  
So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
A fall from him!' Then, for he answer'd  
not,  
'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the  
Queen,  
May help them, loose thy tongue, and let  
me know'  
But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
She quail'd; and he, hussing 'I have no  
sword,'  
Sprang from the door into the dark  
The Queen  
Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;  
And each foresaw the dolorous day to  
be  
And all talk died, as in a grove all song  
Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey,  
Then a long silence came upon the hall,  
And Moored thought, 'The time is hard  
at hand'

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his  
mood  
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,  
At Camelot, high above the yellowing  
woods,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall  
And toward him from the hall, with harp  
in hand,  
And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye  
so, Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
Heard a child wail A stump of oak  
half-dead,  
From roots like some black coil of carven  
snakes,  
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'  
mid air  
Bearing an eagle's nest and thro' the tree  
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the  
wind  
Pierced ever a child's cry and crag and  
tree  
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous  
nest,  
This rubynecklace thrice around her neck,  
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,  
brought  
A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying  
took,  
Then gave it to his Queen to rear - the  
Queen  
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
And named it Nestling, so forgot herself  
A moment, and her cares, till that young  
life  
Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal  
cold  
Past from her, and in time the carcanet  
Vext her with plaintive memories of the  
child.

So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,  
 'Take thou the jewels of this dead in-  
 nocence,  
 And make them, an thou wilt a tourney  
 prize'

To whom the King, 'Perce to thine  
 eagle borne  
 Dead nestling, and this honour after  
 death,  
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,  
 I muse  
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or  
 zone  
 Those diamonds that I rescued from the  
 tarn,  
 And Lancelot won, methought, for thee  
 to wear'

'Would rather you had let them fall,'  
 she cried,  
 'Plunge and be lost—ill fated as they  
 were,  
 A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,  
 Not knowing they were lost as soon as  
 given—  
 Slid from my hands, when I was leaning  
 out  
 Above the river—that unhappy child  
 Past in her barge but rosier luck will go  
 With these rich jewels, seeing that they  
 came  
 Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
 But the sweet body of a maiden babe  
 Perchance—who knows?—the purest of  
 thy knights  
 May win them for the purest of my maids'

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts  
 With trumpet-blowings ran on all the  
 ways  
 From Camelot in among the faded fields  
 To furthest towers, and everywhere the  
 knights  
 Arm'd for a day of glory before the King

But on the hither side of that loud morn  
 Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
 From ear to ear with dogwhip weals, his  
 nose

Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand  
 off,  
 And one with shatter'd fingers dangling  
 lame,  
 A churl, to whom indignantly the King,

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what  
 evil beest  
 Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face?  
 or fiend?  
 Man was it who marr'd heaven's image  
 in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
 splinter'd teeth,  
 Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
 blunt stump  
 Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the  
 maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them to  
 his tower—  
 Some hold he was a table-knight of thine—  
 A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight,  
 he—  
 Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red  
 Knight  
 Brake in upon me and drave them to his  
 tower,  
 And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
 That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
 Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out  
 right have slun,  
 Save that he swore me to a message,  
 saying,  
 "Tell thou the King and all his heirs, that I  
 Have founded my Round Table in the  
 North,  
 And whatsoever his own knights have  
 sworn  
 My knights have sworn the counter to  
 it—and say  
 My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
 But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
 To be none other than themselves—and say  
 My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
 But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
 To be none other, and say his hour is come,  
 The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
 Broken, and his Excalibur a straw "'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the sene-  
schal,  
'Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously  
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be  
whole  
The heathen—but that ever-climbing  
wave,  
Hurl'd back agun so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest—and renegades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,  
whom  
The wholesome realm is purged of other-  
where,  
Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
fealty,—now  
Make their last head like Satan in the  
North  
My younger knights, new-made, in whom  
your flower  
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling,  
which achieved,  
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to  
shore  
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchar'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field,  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle  
with it,  
Only to yield my Queen her own agun?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent—is it  
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It is  
well:  
Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd  
him,  
And while they stood without the doors,  
the King  
Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his  
ears"?'  
The foot that lingers, bidden go,—the  
glance  
That only seems half-loyal to command,—

A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-  
ence—  
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights  
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?  
Or whence the fear lest thus my realm,  
uprear'd,  
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no  
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger  
knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply  
turn'd  
North by the gate In her high bower  
the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that  
she sigh'd  
Then ran across her memory the strange  
rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who  
knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he  
goes'

But when the morning of a tournament,  
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like  
birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds of  
pure  
White samite, and by fountains running  
wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups of  
gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow  
sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
chair

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their  
Queen  
White robed in honour of the stainless  
child,

And some with scatter'd jewels, like a  
bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of  
fire  
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes  
again

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a  
dream

To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll  
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began  
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf  
And gloom and gleam, and shower and  
shorn plume

Went down it. Sighing wearily, as one  
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
When all the goodlier guests are past away,  
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the  
lists

He saw the laws that ruled the tournament  
Broken, but spake not, once, a knight  
cast down

Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
The dead babe and the follies of the King,  
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,  
Modred, a narrow face anon he heard  
The voice that billow'd round the barriers  
roar

An ocean sounding welcome to one knight,  
But newly enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armour'd all in forest green, whereon  
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spry for crest,  
With ever-scattering bernies, and on shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late  
From overseers in Brittany return'd,  
And marriage with a princess of that realm,  
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the  
Woods—

Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime  
with pain

His own against him, and now yearn'd to  
shake

The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
With Tristram ev'n to death—his strong  
hands gript

And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of  
those,

That ware their ladies' colours on the  
casque,

Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
bounds,

And there with gibes and flickering  
mockeries

Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests!  
O shame!

What faith have these in whom they swear  
to love?

The glory of our Round Table is no more'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave,  
the gems,

Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou  
won?

Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand  
Wherewith thou takest this, is red!' to  
whom

Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
languorous mood,

Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss  
me this

Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound?  
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy—Strength  
of heart

And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,  
Are winners in this pastime of our King  
My hand—belike the lance hath dript  
upon it—

No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief  
knight,

Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,  
Great brother, thou nor I have made the  
world;

Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made  
his horse

Caracole, then bow'd his homage, bluntly  
saying,

'Fair damsels, each to him who worships  
each

Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'

And most of these were mute, some anger'd,  
one

Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and  
one,

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick run, plume droopt and  
 mantle clung,  
 And pettish cries awoke, and the war day  
 Went glooming down in wet and weariness  
 But under her black brows a swarthy one  
 Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the patient  
 saints,  
 Our one white day of Innocence hath past,  
 Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So  
 be it  
 The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the  
 year,  
 Would make the world as blink as  
 Winter-tide  
 Come—let us gladden their sad eyes, our  
 Queen's  
 And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
 With all the kindlier colours of the field'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
 first  
 Variously gay for he that tells the tale  
 Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of  
 cold  
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
 snow,  
 And all the purple slopes of mountain  
 flowers  
 Pass under white, till the warm hour  
 returns  
 With veer of wind, and all the flowers  
 again,  
 So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
 And glowing in all colours, the live grass,  
 Rose campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,  
 glanced  
 About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the  
 Queen,  
 And wroth at Tristram and the lawless  
 jousts,  
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to her  
 bower  
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
 morn,  
 High over all the yellowing Autumn tide,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall

Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so,  
 Sir Fool?'  
 Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
 replied,  
 'Belike for lack of wiser company,  
 Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
 Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip  
 To know myself the wisest knight of all'  
 'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eating  
 dry  
 To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
 To dance to' Then he twangled on his  
 harp,  
 And while he twangled little Dagonet stood  
 Quiet as any water-sodden log  
 Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook,  
 But when the twangling ended, skip't again,  
 And being ask'd, 'Why skip't ye not, Sir  
 Fool?'

Made answer, 'I had hefer twenty years  
 Skip to the broken music of my brains  
 Than any broken music thou canst make'  
 Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to  
 come,  
 'Good now, what music have I broken,  
 fool?'  
 And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur,  
 the King's,  
 For when thou playest that air with Queen  
 Isolt,  
 Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
 Her duntier namesake down in Brittany—  
 And so thou breakest Arthur's music too'  
 'Save for that broken music in thy bruns,  
 Sir fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break  
 thy head  
 Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were  
 o'er,  
 The life had flown, we sware but by the  
 shell—  
 I am but a fool to reason with a fool—  
 Come, thou art crabb'd and sour. but  
 lean me down,  
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,  
 And harken if my music be not true

' "Free love—free field—we love but  
 while we may  
 The woods are hush'd, their music is no  
 more

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.  
New leaf, new life—the days of frost are  
o'er

New life, new love, to suit the newer day  
New loves are sweet as those that went  
before

Free love—free field—we love but while  
we may "

'Ye might have moved slow-measure  
to my tune,  
Not stood stockstill I made it in the  
woods,  
And heard it ring as true as tested gold '

But Dagonet with one foot poised in  
his hand,  
'Friend, did ye mark that fountain  
yesterday  
Made to run wine?—but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end—  
And them that round it sat with golden  
cups

To hand the wine to whosoever came—  
The twelve small damosels white as  
Innocence,

In honour of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence the  
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
Gave for a prize—and one of those white  
ships

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and thereupon  
I drank,

Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the  
draught was mud '

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier than  
thy gibes?  
Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—  
Not marking how the knighthood mock  
thee, fool—

"Fear God honour the King—his one  
true knight—

Sole follower of the vows —for here be  
they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
Smutter than blasted grain but when  
the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
It frighted all free fool from out thy heart,  
Which left thee less than fool, and less  
than swine,  
A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,  
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee  
swine.'

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,  
'Knight, an ye fling those rubies round  
my neck

In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some  
touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd  
—the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then I  
wash'd—

I have had my day and my philosophies—  
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's  
fool

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams  
and geese

Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,  
who thrumm'd

On such a wire as musically as thou  
Some such fine song—but never a king's  
fool '

And Tristram, 'Then were swine,  
goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of hell '

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of  
his foot,

'And whither harp'st thou thine? down '  
and thyself

Down ' and two more a helpful harper  
thou,

That harpest downward ' Dost thou know  
the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when  
our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
knights,

Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on 'all hills, and in the signs of  
heaven'

And Dagonet answered, 'Ay, and when  
the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set  
yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your  
wit—  
And whether he were King by courtesy,  
Or King by right—and so went harping  
down  
The black king's highway got so far, and  
grew  
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and  
drakes  
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of  
fire  
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the  
star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram 'not in  
open day'  
And Dagonet, 'Nay, nor will I see it  
and hear  
It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,  
And then we skip' 'Lo fool,' he said,  
'ye talk  
Fool's treason is the King thy brother  
fool?'  
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and  
shrill'd,  
'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of  
fools'  
Conceits himself as God that he can make  
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-  
combs.  
And men from beasts—Long live the king  
of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced  
away,  
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and  
the west  
Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby circled neck, but evermore

Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,  
or flew  
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath  
blown,  
Unruffling waters re collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd,  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again

So on for all that day from lown to lown  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode  
At length  
A lodge of intertwined beechen-boughs  
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the  
which himself  
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden  
grove  
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with  
him  
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish  
King,  
With six or seven, when Tristram was  
away,  
And snatch'd her thence, yet dreading  
worse than shame  
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any  
word,  
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness

And now that desert lodge to Tristram  
lookt  
So sweet, that halting, in the past, and  
sank  
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown,  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smoothe  
And sleek his marriage over to the Queen  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all  
The tonguesters of the court she had not  
heard  
But then what folly had sent him overseas  
After she left him lonely here? a name?  
Was it the name of one in Britanny,  
Isolt, the daughter of the King? 'Isolt  
Of the white hands' they call'd her. the  
sweet name



Allured him first, and then the maid her  
 self,  
 Who served him well with those white  
 hands of hers,  
 And loved him well, until himself had  
 thought  
 He loved her also, wedded easily,  
 But left her all as easily, and return'd  
 The black blue Irish harp and Irish eyes  
 Had drawn him home—what marvel?  
 Then he laid  
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
 dream'd

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany  
 Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
 And show'd them both the ruby chain,  
 and both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen  
 Grispt it so hard, that all her hand was red  
 Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand  
 is red'

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood  
 And melts within her hand—her hand is  
 hot

With ill desires, but thus I gave thee, look,  
 Is all as cool and white as any flower'  
 Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then  
 A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
 Because the twin had spoil'd her car-  
 canet

He dream'd, but Arthur with a hun-  
 dred spears  
 Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
 And many a glancing plash and sallow  
 isle,

The wide wing'd sunset of the misty marsh  
 Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
 That stood with open doors, whereout  
 was roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure  
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil song  
 'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth,  
 for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
 A goodly brother of the Table Round  
 Swung by the neck and on the boughs  
 a shield

Showing a shower of blood in a field no more,  
 And therebeside a horn, inflamed the  
 knight

At that dishonour done the gilded spur,  
 Till each would chase the shield, and fling  
 the horn

But Arthur waded them back Alone he  
 rode

Then at the dry harsh roar of the great  
 horn

That sent the fice of all the marsh aloft  
 An ever upward rushing, storm and cloud  
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight  
 heard, and all,

Liven to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
 In blood red armour calling, haw'd to  
 the King,

'The teeth of Hell fly bare and gnash  
 thee flat'—

Lo! art thou not that cunuch hearted  
 King

Who fain had elipt free manhood from  
 the world—

The women worshipper? Yea, Gods  
 curse, and I'

Slain was the brother of my paramour  
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard  
 her whine

And snivel, being cunuch-hearted too,  
 Swore by the scorpion worm that twists  
 in hell,

And stings itself to everlasting death,  
 To hang whatever I might of thine I sought  
 And tumbled Art thou King?—I look  
 to thy life'

He ended Arthur knew the voice, the  
 face

Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the  
 name

Went wandering somewhere darkling in  
 his mind

And Arthur deign'd not use of word or  
 sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from  
 horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
 Down from the causeway heavily to the  
 swamp

I'll, as the crest of some slow arching  
     wave,  
 Heard in dead night along that table-  
     shore,  
 Drops first, and after the great waters  
     break  
 Whiten'ing for half a league, and thin  
     themselves,  
 Far o'er sands marbled with moon and  
     cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing, thus he fell  
 Heard heavy, then the knights, who  
     watch'd him, roard  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the  
     fill'n,  
 There trampled out his face from being  
     known,  
 And sent his head in mire, and slimed  
     themselves  
 Nor heard the King for their own cries,  
     but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and  
     left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces,  
     hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and slew  
 Till all the rafters ring with women-yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with  
     massacre  
 Then, echoing well with yell, they fired  
     the tower,  
 Which half that autumn night, like the  
     live North,  
 Red pulsing up thro' Alloth and Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres  
 About it, as the water Moab saw  
 Come round by the East, and out beyond  
     them flush'd  
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea

So all the ways were safe from shore to  
     shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red  
     dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge  
     return'd,  
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
     boughs

He whistled his good warhorse left to  
     graze  
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,  
 And rode beneath an ever-show'ring leaf,  
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a  
     cross,  
 Stay'd him 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,'  
     she said, 'my man  
 Hath left me or is dead,' whereon he  
     thought—  
 'What, if she hate me now? I would  
     not this  
 What, if she love me still? I would not  
     that  
 I know not what I would'—but said to  
     her,  
 'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
     return,  
 He find thy favour changed and love thee  
     not'—  
 Then pressing dry by day thro' Lyonesse  
 Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly  
     hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and  
     gain'd  
 Tintagl, half in sea, and high on land,  
 A crown of towers

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea sunset glorying round her hair  
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the  
     Queen  
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram  
     grind  
 The spring stone that scaled about her  
     tower,  
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,  
     and there  
 Belted his body with her white embrace,  
 Crying aloud, 'Not Mark—not Mark,  
     my soul'  
 The footstep flutter'd me at first not he  
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my  
     Mark,  
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his  
     halls  
 Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to the  
     death  
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark

Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh '  
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am here  
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine '

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,  
'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me,  
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow—Mark ?

What rights are his that dare not strike for them ?

Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me thus '

But harken ! have ye met him ? hence he went

To day for three days' hunting—as he said—

And so returns belike within an hour  
Mark's way, my soul !—but eat not thou with Mark,

Because he hates thee even more than fears,

Nor drink and when thou passest any wood

Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush  
Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark

Is as the measure of my love for thee '

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,

Dram'd of her force, again she sat, and spake

To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,

'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,  
For, ere I mated with my shambling king,  
Ye twain had fallen out about the bride  
Of one—his name is out of me—the prize,  
If prize she were—(what marvel—she could see)—

Thine, friend ; and ever since my craven seeks

To wreck thee villainously . but, O Sir Knight,  
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last ?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Paramount,  
Here now to my Queen Paramount of love  
And loveliness—ay, lovelier than when first  
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,  
Sailing from Ireland '

Softly laugh'd Isolt,  
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen

My dole of beauty trebled ?' and he said,  
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me—soft, gracious, kind—

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips  
Most gracious, but she, haughty, ev'n to him,

Lancelot, for I have seen him wan enow  
To make one doubt if ever the great Queen  
Have yielded him her love '

To whom Isolt,  
'Ah then, false hunter and false harper, thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,

Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me

That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,

And I—mis-yoked with such a want of man—

That I could hardly sin against the lowest '

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be comforted '

If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings  
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin

That made us happy but how ye greet me—fear

And fault and doubt—no word of that fond tale—

Thy deep heart-yearnings, 'thy sweet  
memories  
Of Tristram in that year he was away'

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
Isolt,  
'I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for, hour  
by hour,  
Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-  
smiling seas,  
Watch'd from this tower Isolt of Britain  
dash'd  
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?  
Wedded her?  
Fought in her father's battles? wounded  
there?  
The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-  
ness,  
And she, my namesake of the hands, that  
heal'd  
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
caress—  
Well—can I wish her any huger wrong  
Than having known thee? her too hast  
thou left  
To pine and waste in those sweet  
memories  
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all  
men  
Are noble, I should hate thee more than  
love'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,  
replied,  
'Grace, Queen, for being loved she  
loved me well  
Did I love her? the name at least I loved  
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!  
The night was dark, the true star set  
Isolt!  
The name was ruler of the dark.—Isolt?  
Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,  
meek,  
Pale blooded, she will yield herself to  
God'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why  
not I?  
Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
Pale-blooded, prayerful Let me tell  
thee now  
Here one black, mute midsummer night  
I sat,  
Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering  
where,  
Murmuring a light song I had heard thee  
sing,  
And once or twice I spake thy name aloud  
Then flash'd a levin-brand, and near me  
stood,  
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
fiend—  
Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
dark—  
For there was Mark "He has wedded  
her," he said,  
Not said, but hiss'd it then this crown  
of towers  
So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,  
And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
"I will flee hence and give myself to  
God"—  
And thou wert lying in thy new leman's  
arms'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her  
hand,  
'May God be with thee, sweet, when old  
and gray,  
And past desire!' a saying that anger'd  
her  
'"May God be with thee, sweet, when  
thou art old,  
And sweet no more to me!" I need  
Him now  
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so  
gross  
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the  
mast?  
The greater man, the greater courtesy  
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
knight!  
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild  
beasts—  
Save that to touch a harp, ult with a lance

Becomes thee well—art grown wild beast  
thyself

How darest thou, if lover, push me even  
In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
In the gray distance, half a life away,  
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,  
unswear!

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,  
Thy marriage and mine own, that I  
should such

Lies like sweet wines lie to me I believe  
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye  
kneel,

And solemnly as when ye swore to him,  
The man of men, our King—My God,  
the power

Was once in vows when men believed the  
King!

They lied not then, who swore, and thro'  
their vows

The King prevailing made his realm —  
I say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when  
old,

Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in de  
spair!

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and  
down,

'Vows' did you keep the vow you made  
to Mark

More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay,  
but learnt,

The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
itself—

My knighthood taught me this—ye, being  
snapt—

We run more counter to the soul thereof  
Than had we never sworn I swear no  
more

I swore to the great King, and am for-  
sworn

For once—ev'n to the height—I honour'd  
him

"Man, is he man at all?" methought,  
when first

I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
beheld

That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—

His hur, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the steel  
blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips  
with light—

Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about his end  
Amazed me, then, his foot was on a stool  
Shaped as a dragon, he seem'd to me no  
man,

But Michael trampling Satan, so I swore,  
Being amazed but this went by—The  
vows!

O ay—the wholesome madness of an  
hour—

They served their use, their time, for  
every knight

Believed himself a greater than himself,  
And every follower eyed him as a God;  
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had  
done,

And so the realm was made; but then  
their vows—

First mainly thro' that sullying of our  
Queen—

Began to gail the knighthood, asking  
whence

Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?  
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up  
from out the deep?

They fail'd to trice him thro' the flesh  
and blood

Of our old kings whence then? a doubt  
ful lord

To bind them by inviolable vows,  
Which flesh and blood perforce would  
violate

For feel this arm of mine—the tide within  
Red with free chase and heather-scented  
air,

Pulsing full man, can Arthur make me  
pure

As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
From uttering freely what I freely hear?  
Bind me to one? The wide world  
laughs at it

And worldling of the world am I, and  
know

The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour

Woos his own end ; we are not angels here  
 Nor shall be vows—I am woodman of  
     the woods,  
 And hear the garnet-headed jaffingale  
 Mock them . my soul, we love but while  
     we may ;  
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here enaung, he moved toward her,  
 and she said,  
 ' Good . an I turn'd av ay my love for thee  
 To some one thrice as courteous as thy-  
     self—

For courtesy wins woman all as well  
 As valour may, but he that closes both  
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller indeed,  
 Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I loved  
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast  
     thee back

Thine own small saw, "We love but  
     while we may,"  
 Well then, what answer ?'

He that while she spake,  
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn her  
     with,

The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch  
 The warm white apple of her throat,  
     replied,

' Press this a little closer, sweet, until—  
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd—  
     meat,

Wine, wine—and I will love thee to the  
     death,  
 And out beyond into the dream to come '

So then, when both were brought to  
     full accord,

She rose, and set before him all he will'd ,  
 And after these had comforted the blood  
 With meats and wines, and satiated their  
     hearts—

Now talking of their woodland paradise.  
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,  
     the lawns ;

Now mocking at the much ungunliness,  
 And craven shifts, and long crane legs of  
     Mark—

Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,  
     and sang

' Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend  
     the brier '

A star in heaven, a star within the mere '  
 Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire,  
 And one was far apart, and one was near  
 Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the  
     grass '

And one was water and one star was fire,  
 And one will ever shine and one will pass  
 Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the  
     mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer Tris-  
     tram show'd

And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,  
 ' The collar of some Order, which our  
     King

Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,  
 For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy  
     peers '

' Not so, my Queen,' he said, ' but the  
     red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,  
 And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,  
 And hither brought by Tristram for his  
     last

Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
     thee '

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging  
     round her neck,  
 Claspt it, and cried ' Thine Order, O my  
     Queen '

But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd  
     throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
     touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—  
 ' Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him  
     thro' the brain

That night came Arthur home and  
     while he climb'd,

All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
     gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd and  
     saw

The great Queen's bower was dark,—  
     about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,

'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,

And I shall never make thee smile again'

### GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury Weeping, none with her save a little maid,

A voice one low light betwixt them burn'd

Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,

Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full, The white mist, like a face cloth to the face,

Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight

Sir Modred, he that like a subtle beast Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,

Ready to spring, waiting a chance for this

He chill'd the popular praises of the King With silent smiles of slow disparagement, And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,

Heathen, the brood by Hengist left, and sought

To make disruption in the Table Round Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds Serving his traitorous end, and all his ums

Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,

Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,

Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,

That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,

Climb'd to the high top of the garden wall

To spy some secret scandal if he might, And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best

Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court The wildest and the worst, and more than this

He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand

Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,

So from the high wall and the flowering grove

Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,

And cast him as a worm upon the way, But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man, Made such excuses as he might, and these Full knightly without scorn, for in those days

No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn,

But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,

Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect, And he was answer'd softly by the King And all his Table So Sir Lancelot help To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice

Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went

But, ever after, the small violence done Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart, As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long A little bitter pool about a stone On the bare coast

But when Sir Lancelot told

This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall, Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries

'I shudder, some one steps across my grave,'

Then lough'd again, but faintlier, for in deed  
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
 Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
 Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend  
 the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her Many a time for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—  
 Held her awake or if she slept, she dream'd  
 An awful dream, for then she seem'd to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—  
 When lo! her own, that broadening from  
 her feet,  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land,  
 and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke  
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew,  
 Till even the clear face of the guileless  
 King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household life,  
 Became her bane, and at the last she said,  
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own  
 land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again, some evil chance

Will make the smouldering scandal break  
 and blaze  
 Before the people, and our lord the King  
 And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
 And still they met and met Again she said,  
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
 hence'  
 And then they were agreed upon a night  
 (When the good King should not be there)  
 to meet  
 And part for ever Vivien, lurking, near'd  
 She told Sir Modred Passion-pale they met  
 And greeted Hands in hands, and eye  
 to eye  
 Low on the border of her couch they sat  
 Stammering and staring It was their  
 last hour,  
 A madness of farewells And Modred  
 brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the tower  
 For testimony, and crying with full voice  
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'  
 aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,  
 and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare  
 him off,  
 And all was still then she, 'The end is  
 come,  
 And I am shamed for ever,' and he said,  
 'Mine be the shame, mine was the sin  
 but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle overseas  
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against the  
 world'  
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold  
 me so?  
 My friend, for we have taken our farewells  
 Would God that thou couldest hide me  
 from myself'  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
 Unwedded yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
 And hide my doom' So Lancelot got  
 her horse,



Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping for  
he past,

Love loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste  
and weald,

And heard the Spirits of the waste and  
weald

Morn as she fled, or thought she heard  
them morn

And in herself she moan'd 'Too late, too  
late'

Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
morn,

A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a  
field of death,

For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the  
court,

Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land'

And when she came to Almesbury she  
spake

There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine  
enemies

Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her  
time

To tell you ' and her beauty, grace and  
power,

Wrought as a charm upon them, and  
they spared

To ask it

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the  
nuns,

Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name,  
nor sought,

Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for  
shrift,

But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heed-  
lessness

Which often lured her from herself, but  
now,

This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the  
realm,

And leagued him with the heathen, while  
the King

Was waging war on Lancelot then she  
thought,

'With what a hate the people and the  
King

Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon  
her hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so  
late!

What hour, I wonder, now?' and when  
she drew

No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her, 'Late,  
so late'

Which when she heard, the Queen look'd  
up, and said,

'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
weep'

Whereat full willingly sang the little  
maid

'Late, late, so late' and dark the  
night and chill'

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now

'No light had we for that we do  
repent,

And learning this, the bridegroom will  
relent

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now

'No light so late' and dark and chill  
the night'

O let us in, that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late ye cannot enter now

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is  
so sweet?

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet'  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now'

So sang the novice, while full passion-  
ately,

Her head upon her hands, remembering



And in the light the white mermaiden  
swam,  
And strong man breasted things stood  
from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the  
land,

To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn  
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he past the dim lit  
woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with  
joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
flower,

That shook beneath them, as the thistle  
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the  
seed

And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and  
broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and  
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
hall,

And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd, for every  
knight

Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
By hands unseen, and even as he sud  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the  
butts

While the wine ran so glad were spirits  
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat  
bitterly,  
'Were they so glad? all prophets were  
they all,  
Spirits and men could none of them  
foresee,  
Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the  
realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously again,  
'Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father  
sud,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
Between the steep cliff and the coming  
wave,

And many a mystic lay of life and death  
Had chanted on the smoky mountain  
tops,

When round him bent the spirits of the  
hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like  
flame

So said my father—and that night the bard  
Sung Arthur's glorious wars, and sang  
the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rul'd all  
those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois  
For there was no man knew from whence  
he came,

But after tempest, when the long wave  
broke

All down the thundering shores of Rude  
and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and  
then

They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;  
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd  
him

Till he by miracle was approven King  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth, and could  
he find

A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the  
world

But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the  
harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would  
have fall'n,

But that they stay'd him up, nor would  
he tell

His vision, but what doubt that he fore  
saw

This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they  
 have set her on,  
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
 To play upon me,' and bow'd her head  
 nor spake  
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd  
 hands,  
 Shame on her own gurrality gurrulously,  
 And the good nuns would check her  
 gadding tongue  
 Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem  
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
 Which my good father told me, check  
 me too  
 Nor let me shame my father's memory,  
 one  
 Of noblest manners tho' himself would say  
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest, and he  
 died,  
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers  
 back,  
 And left me, but of others who remain,  
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
 But pray you, which had noblest, while  
 you moved  
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the  
 King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and  
 answer'd her,  
 'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and these  
 two  
 Were the most nobly manner'd men of  
 all;  
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such  
 fur fruit?  
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
 sand fold  
 Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
 The most disloyal friend in all the world'

To which a mournful answer made the  
 Queen  
 'O closed about by narrowing nunnery-  
 walls,  
 What knowest thou of the world, and all  
 its lights  
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the  
 woe?  
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of  
 fire,  
 And weep for her who drew him to his  
 doom'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pry for  
 both,  
 But I should all as soon believe that his,  
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
 would be  
 Such as they are, were you the sinful  
 Queen

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
 where she would heal,  
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who  
 cried,

'Such as thou art be never maiden more  
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague  
 And pry upon, and harry me, petty spy  
 And traitress' When that storm of anger  
 brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
 White as her veil, and stood before the  
 Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
 And when the Queen had added 'Get  
 thee hence,'

Fled frighted Then that other left alone  
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
 Saying in herself, 'The simple, fearful  
 child

Meant nothing, but my own too fearful  
 guilt,  
 Simpler than any child betrays itself  
 But help me, heaven, for surely I repent

For what is true repentance but in thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant  
to us

And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more'

And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot  
came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
man,

Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the  
time

Was daytime, and as yet no sin was  
dream'd,)

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'  
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur rused  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before, and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well

But when the Queen immersed in such  
a trance,

And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw  
the King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to  
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought  
him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not  
like him,

'Not like my Lancelot'—while she  
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery  
ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King'  
She sat

Stiff stricken, listening, but when armed  
feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she  
fell,

And grovelling with her face against the  
floor

There with her milkwhite arms and  
shadowy hair

She made her face a darkness from the  
King

And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pulse by her, then came silence, then a  
voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed,  
the King's

'Liest thou here so low, the child of  
one

I honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame'  
Well is it that no child is born of thee  
The children born of thee are sword and  
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern  
Sea,

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right  
arm

The mightiest of my knights, abode with  
me,

Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles running overthrown  
And knowest thou now from whence I  
come—from him,

From waging bitter war with him and  
he,

That did not shun to smite me in worse  
way,

Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left

He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight but many a  
knight was slain,

And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Cleave to him, and abode in his own land  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,

Forgetful of their troth and fealty, cleave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I  
live,

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd  
Fear not thou shalt be guarded till my  
death

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my  
doom

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to  
me,

That I the King should greatly care to  
live,

For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life  
Bear with me for the last time while I  
show,

Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast  
sinn'd

For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a  
deed

Of prowess done redress'd a random  
wrong

But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and  
all

The realms together under me, their  
Head,

In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time  
I made them lay their hands in mine and  
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as  
their King,

To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrong,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest christity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her, for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable  
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a  
man)

And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy "

Then came thy shameful sin with Lance  
lot,

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt,  
Then others, following these my mightiest  
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fur  
names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
and wrong,

Not greatly care to lose, but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my  
knights,

And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin  
For which of us, who might be left, could  
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at  
thee?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Ush  
Thy shadow still would glide from room  
to room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair  
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love  
thy lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee

I am not made of so slight elements  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
shame

I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the  
wife

Whom he knows false, abide and rule the  
house

For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among the  
crowd,

Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and  
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the  
pulse

With devil's leeches, and poisons half the  
young

Worst of the worst were that man he that  
reigns !

Better the King's waste hearth and aching  
heart

Than thou resented in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their  
bane'

He paused, and in the pause she crept  
an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew

Then waiting by the doors the warhorse  
neigh'd

As at a friend's voice, and he spake again

' Yet think not that I come to urge thy  
crimes,

I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die

To see thee, lying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet

The wrath which forced my thoughts on  
that fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming  
death,

(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is  
past

The pang—which while I weigh'd thy  
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn—is also past—  
part

And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives do thou for thine own soul the  
rest

But how to take last leave of all I loved !  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing ! O imperial moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
thee—

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's only, they never were the  
King's

I cannot take thy hand, that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and  
mine own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
“ I loathe thee ” yet not less, O Guine  
vere,

I or I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my  
life

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,

And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and  
thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
and know

I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another Leave me  
that,

I charge thee, my last hope Now must  
I hence

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet  
blow

They summon me their King to lead mine  
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man they  
call

My sister's son—no kin of mine, who  
leagues

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,  
and knights,

Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet  
myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
event,  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more—  
Farewell !

And while she grovelling at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her  
neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that  
blest

Then, listening till those armed steps  
were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish  
found  
The casement 'peradventure,' so she  
thought,

'If I might see his face, and not be seen'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !  
And near him the sad nuns with each a  
light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the  
Queen,

To guard and foster her for evermore  
And while he spake to these his helm was  
lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon  
clung

Of Britain, so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she  
saw,

Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of  
fire

And even then he turn'd, and more and  
more

The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him  
gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom,

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud

'Oh Arthur !' there her voice brake  
suddenly,

Then—as a stream that spouting from a  
cliff

Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale—

Went on in passionate utterance

'Gone—my lord !

Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain !  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak  
Farewell ? I should have answer'd his  
farewell.

His mercy choked me    Gone, my lord  
the King,

My own true lord ! how dare I call him  
mine ?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution he, the  
King,

Call'd me polluted shall I kill myself ?  
What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,  
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame,  
No, nor by living can I live it down

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks  
to months,

The months will add themselves and make  
the years,

The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn  
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame  
Let the world be, that is but of the world  
What else ? what hope ? I think there was  
a hope,

Except he mock'd me when he spake of  
hope,

His hope he call'd it, but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts  
And blessed be the King, who hath for-  
given

My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down  
sin

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God    Ah great and gentle  
lord,

Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint



Among his warring senses, to thy  
knights—

To whom my false voluptuous pride, that  
took

Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the  
height

To which I would not or I could not  
climb—

I thought I could not breathe in that fine  
air

That pure severity of perfect light—

I yearn'd for warmth and colour which I  
found

In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou  
art,

Thou art the highest and most human  
too,

Not Lancelot, nor another Is there  
none

Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle?

none

Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring Ah my  
God,

What might I not have made of thy fair  
world,

Had I but loved thy highest creature  
here?

It was my duty to have loved the highest  
It surely was my profit had I known

It would have been my pleasure had I  
seen

We needs must love the highest when we  
see it,

Not Lancelot, nor another '

Here her hand  
Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes - she  
look'd and saw

The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said  
to her,

'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'

Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
All round her, weeping, and her heart  
was loosed

Within her, and she wept with these and  
said,

'Ye know me then, that wicked one,  
who broke

The vast design and purpose of the King  
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery

walls,  
Meek maidens, from the voices crying

"shame."

I must not scorn myself he loves me still  
Let no one dream but that he loves me

still

So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with  
you,

Wear black and white, and be a nun like  
you,

First with your fasts, not feasting with  
your feasts,

Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at  
your joys,

But not rejoicing, mingle with your rites,  
Pray and be pray'd for, lie before your  
shrines,

Do each low office of your holy house,  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole

To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and halier too than I,

And treat their loathsome hurts and heal  
mine own,

And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,

Which wrought the ruin of my lord the  
King'

She said they took her to themselves,  
and she

Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too late?'

Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess  
died

Then she, for her good deeds and her  
pure life,

And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had

borne,  
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess

lived

For three brief years, and there, an  
Abbess, past

To where beyond these voices there is  
peace

*End of 'The Round Table'*

# ✓ THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
First made and latest left of all the  
knights,  
Told, when the man was no more than a  
voice  
In the white winter of his age, to those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds

For on their march to westward,  
Bedivere,  
Who slowly paced among the slumbering  
host,  
Heard in his tent the moanings of the  
King

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His  
fields,

But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die  
O me! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser god had made the world,  
But had not force to shape it as he would,  
Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful?  
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,  
But that these eyes of men are dense and  
dim,

And have not power to see it as it is  
Perchance, because we see not to the  
close,—

For I, being simple, thought to work His  
will,

And have but stricken with the sword in  
vain,

And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend  
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, and is no more  
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my  
death

Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall  
not die'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the  
west,  
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain  
kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
Went shrilling, 'Hollow, hollow all  
delight!

Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away

Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee  
And I am blown along a wandering  
wind,

And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight'  
And funter onward, like wild birds that  
change

Their season in the night and wail their  
way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind  
the dream

Shrill'd, but in going mingled with dim  
cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
When all is lost, and wife and child with  
wail

Pass to new lords, and Arthur woke and  
call'd,

'Who spake? A dream O light upon  
the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these  
dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste  
and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along withme?'

Thus heard the bold Sir Bedivere and  
spake

'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the  
field,

But in their stead thy name and glory cling  
To all high places like a golden cloud  
For ever but as yet thou shalt not pass  
Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
death

Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
And care not thou for dreams from him,  
but rise—

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and  
knights  
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but  
grosser grown  
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and  
thee  
Right well in heart they know thee for  
the King  
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old '

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere  
'Far otho is this battle in the west  
Whereto we move, than when we strove  
in youth,  
And brake the petty kings, and fought  
with Rome,  
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
wall,  
And shook him thro' the north Ill doom  
is mine  
To war against my people and my knights  
The king who fights his people fights  
himself  
And they my knights, who loved me once,  
the stroke  
That strikes them dead is as my death to  
me  
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I  
saw  
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
Hath folded in the passes of the world '

Then rose the King and moved his host  
by night,  
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by  
league,  
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—  
A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
By fire, to sink into the abyss again,  
Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
dwelt,  
And the long mountains ended in a coast  
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
The phantom circle of a moaning sea  
There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
And he that fled no further fly the King;  
And there, that day when the great light  
of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year.  
On the waste sand by the waste sea they  
closed  
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
west  
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and  
sea  
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
it, drew  
Down with his blood, till all his heart was  
cold  
With formless fear, and ev'n on Arthur  
fell  
Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
fought.  
For friend and foe were shadows in the  
mist,  
And friend slew friend not knowing whom  
he slew;  
And some had visions out of golden  
youth,  
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts  
Look in upon the battle, and in the mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
And chance and craft and strength in  
single fights,  
And ever and anon with host to host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
hard mail hewn,  
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,  
the crash  
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and  
shrieks  
After the Christ, of those who falling down  
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the  
mist,  
And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
knights,  
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blas-  
phemies,  
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of  
the lungs  
In that close mist, and cryings for the  
light,  
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after  
wail  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro death

Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,

Save for some whisper of the seething seas,  
A dead hush fell, but when the dolorous day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew

The mist aside, and with that wind the tide  
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field

Of battle but no man was moving there,  
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave  
Brake among dead faces, to and fro  
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down

Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,  
And shiver'd brands that once had fought  
with Rome,

And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,

And whiter than the mist that all day long  
Had held the field of battle was the King

'Hearest thou this great voice that  
shakes the world,

And wastes the narrow realm whereon we  
move,

And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho' they had not died for  
me?—

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n  
Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King  
Behold, I seem but King among the dead'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere  
'My King,

King everywhere! and so the dead have  
kings,

There also will I worship thee as King  
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
Who love thee, but who hates thee, he  
that brought

The heathen back among us, yonder  
stands,

Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine  
house'

Then spake the King 'My house hath  
been my doom

But call not thou this traitor of my house  
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with  
me

My house are rather they who swear my  
vows,

Yea, even while they brake them, own'd  
me King

And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,  
When all the purport of my throne hath  
fail'd,

That quick or dead thou holdest me for  
King

King am I, whatsoever be their cry,  
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou  
see

Yet, ere I pass' And uttering thus the  
King

Made at the man then Modred smote  
his liege

Hard on that helm which many a heathen  
sword

Had beaten thin, while Arthur at one  
blow,

Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,  
King Arthur Then, because his wound  
was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere

'The sequel of to day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights

Whereof this world holds record    Such  
a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved    I think  
that we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again

To rule once more, but, let what will be,  
be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride for thou remem-  
berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king,  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known  
But now delay not take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded man,  
Yet I thy best will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept,

And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam    He,  
stepping down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake

There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
bur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt

For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,

Mynads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery    He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
stood,

Thus way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw    but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge

So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere

This is a shameful thing for men to lie

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go agun,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought,  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men

What good should follow this, if this were  
done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule  
Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And 'rumours of a doubt? But were this

Stored <sup>kept,</sup> in <sup>some</sup> treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excali-  
bur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
depths

Upon the hidden bases of the hills"

So might some old man speak in the after-  
time

To all the people, winning reverence  
But now much honour and much fame  
were lost'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily  
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds'

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt,

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn  
Scen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the Northern Sea  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur  
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
     ful,  
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd  
     him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the  
     mere  
 And lightly went the other to the King

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
     thicker breath  
 'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done  
 Speak out what is it thou hast heard, or  
     seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
     vere  
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
     gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never  
     saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
     ing him,  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
     ful,  
 That caught him by the hilt, and  
     brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the  
     mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
     ing hard  
 'My end draws nigh, 'tis time that I  
     were gone  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
     weight,  
 And bear me to the margin, yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
     die'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
     rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
 As in a picture Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found  
     not words,  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on  
     one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
     hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of  
     tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
     hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
     the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
 'Quick, quick '  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
     ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
     he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
 Before His own thought drove him like  
     a good  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and  
     right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
     as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
     heels—  
 And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
     barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them, and descending they were  
     ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately  
     forms,  
 Black stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
     —by these  
 Three Queens with crowns of gold and  
     from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the  
world

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge'  
So to the barge they came There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against a brow  
Striped with dark blood for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-  
ing east,

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with  
drops

Of onset, and the light and lustrous  
curls—

That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd  
with dust,

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips

So like a shatter'd column lay the King,  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in

rest,  
From <sup>rest</sup> sput to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
charged

Before the eyes of ladies and of kings

Then loudly cried the bold Sir  
Bedivere

Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are  
dead,

When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh  
But now the whole Round Table is dis-  
solved

Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the  
barge

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world

Comfort thyself what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within himself make pure! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul More things are  
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of Wherefore,  
let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God,

But now farewell I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt)—

To the island-valley of Avilion,  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies



Deep meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard  
lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood  
With swarthy webs Long stood Sir  
Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of  
dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away

But when that moan had past for ever-  
more,  
The stillness of the dead world's winter  
dawn  
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King  
is gone'  
And therewithal came on him the weird  
rhyme,  
'From the great deep to the great deep  
he goes'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
clomb  
The last hard footstep of that iron  
crag,

I hence mark'd the black hull moving yet,  
and cried,  
'He passes to be King among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous wound  
He comes again, but—if he come no  
more—  
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black  
bort,  
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three  
whereat we grazed  
On that high day, when, clothed with  
living light,  
They stood before his throne in silence,  
friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint  
As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,  
and clomb  
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and  
saw,  
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare  
the King,  
Down that long water opening on the deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
From less to less and vanish into light  
And the new sun rose bringing the new  
year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—  
Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the  
Prince  
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life  
again  
From halfway down the shadow of the  
grave,  
Past with thee thro' thy people and their  
love,

And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'  
all  
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of  
man  
And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,  
The prayer of many a race and creed,  
and clime—  
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea  
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,  
And that true North, whereof we lately  
heard

A strain to shame us 'Keep you to your-  
selves ,

So loyal is too costly ! friends—your love  
Is but a burthen loose the bond, and go '  
Is this the tone of empire ? here the faith  
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her  
voice

And meaning, whom the roar of Hougou-  
mont

Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ?  
What shock has fool'd her since, that she  
should speak

So feebly ? wealthier—wealthier—hour  
by hour !

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her  
seas ?

There rang her voice, when the full city  
peal'd

Thee and thy Prince ! The loyal to their  
crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who love  
Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
homes

For ever-broadening England, and her  
throne

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,  
That knows not her own greatness<sup>t</sup> if  
she knows

And dreads it we are fall'n —But thou,  
my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave  
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
with Soul,

Ideal manhood closed in real man,  
Rather than that gray king, whose name,  
a ghost,

Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from  
mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still ;  
or him

Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's,  
one

Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time  
That hover'd between war and wanton-  
ness,

And crownings and dethronements take  
withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance back  
From thine and ours for some we scared,  
who mark,

Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,  
Waverings of every vane with every wind,  
And wordy trucklings to the transient  
hour,

And fierce or careless looseners of the  
faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple  
life,

Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
Or Labour, with a groan and not a voice,  
Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n from  
France,

And that which knows, but careful for  
itself,

And that which knows not, ruling that  
which knows

To its own harm the goal of this great  
world

Lies beyond sight yet—it our slowly  
grown

And crown'd Republic's crowning com-  
mon-sense,

That saved her many times, not fail—  
their fears

Are morning shadows huger than the  
shapes

That cast them, not those gloomier which  
forego

The darkness of that battle in the West  
Where all of high and holy dies away

# THE LOVER'S TALE

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?

May 1879

## ARGUMENT

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II and III) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

### I

HERE far away, seen from the topmost cliff,

Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down  
rare sails,

White as white clouds, floated from sky  
to sky

Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the outer  
sea

Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful love,  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
that fledged

The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
watcheth Love,

In thine own essence, and delight thyself  
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.

Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay'  
See, sirs,

Even now the 'Goddess of the Past, that  
'takes

The heart, and sometimes touches but  
one string

That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes  
Sweeps suddenly, all its half-moulder'd  
chords

To some old melody, begins to play

That air which pleased her first I feel  
thy breath,

I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye  
Thy breath is of the pinewood, and tho'  
years

Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy  
strut

Between the native land of Love and me,  
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
And East of Life

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
To pass my hand across my brows, and  
muse

On those dear hills, that never more will  
meet

The sight that throbs and aches beneath  
my touch,

As tho' there beat a heart in either eye,  
For when the outer lights are darken'd  
thus,

The memory's vision hath a keener edge  
It grows upon me now—the semicircle  
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
Of curving beach—its wreaths of dripping  
green—

Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse  
aloft

That open'd on the pines with doors of  
glass,

A mountain nest—the pleasure boat that  
 rock'd,  
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel to  
 keel,  
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave,  
 That blanch'd upon its side

O Love, O Hope!

They come, they crowd upon me all at  
 once—

Moved from the cloud of unforgotten  
 things,

That sometimes on the horizon of the  
 mind

Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
 storm—

Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me—  
 days

Of dewy dawning and the amber eyes  
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
 Were borne about the bay or safely  
 moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the  
 tide

Plash'd, snapping its worn ribs, and all  
 without

The slowly ridging rollers on the cliffs  
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro'  
 the arch

Down those leud waters, like a setting  
 star,

Mixt with the gorgeous vest the light-  
 house shone,

And silver smiling Venus ere she fell  
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
 To crown it with herself

Here, too, my love

Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
 hung

From his mid dome in Heaven's airy  
 halls,

Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,  
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her  
 lips,

Quiver'd a flying glory on her hur,  
 Leapt like a passing thought across her  
 eyes;

And mine with one that will not pass,  
 till earth

And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven,  
 a face

Most starry-fair, but kindled from within  
 As 'twere with dawn She was dark-  
 hair'd, dark eyed

Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance of  
 them

Will govern a whole life from birth to  
 death,

Careless of all things else, led on with light  
 In trances and in visions look at them,  
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance,

You cannot find their depth, for they go  
 back,

And farther back, and still withdraw  
 themselves

Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
 Fresh springing from her fountains in the  
 brain,

Still pouring thro', floods with redundant  
 life

Her narrow portals

Trust me, long ago

I should have died, if it were possible  
 To die in gazing on that perfectness  
 Which I do bear within me I had died,  
 But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,  
 Thine image, like a charm of light and  
 strength

Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
 On these deserted sands of barren life  
 Tho' from the deep vault where the heart  
 of Hope

Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark—  
 Forgetting how to render beautiful  
 Her countenance with quick and health-  
 ful blood—

Thou didst not sway me upward, could  
 I perish

While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
 Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
 quiet urn

For ever? He, that saith it, hath o'er  
 slept

The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
 And fall'n away from judgment Thou  
 art light,

To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers  
 And length of days, and immortality

Of thought, and freshness ever self-renew'd  
 For Time and Grief abode too long with Life,  
 And, like all other friends i' the world, at last  
 They grew weary of her fellowship  
 So Time and Grief did beckon unto Death,  
 And Death drew nigh and beat the doors of Life,  
 But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,  
 A wakeful portress, and didst parle with Death,—  
 'This is a charmed dwelling which I hold,'  
 So Death gave back, and would no further come  
 Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
 Nor in the present place To me alone,  
 Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
 The Present is the vassal of the Past  
 So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
 And cannot die, and am, in having been—  
 A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
 Thrust forward on to-day and out of place,  
 A body journeying onward, sick with toil,  
 The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
 The grasp of hopeless grief about my heart,  
 And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,  
 Which long ago they had glean'd and garner'd up  
 Into the granaries of memory—  
 The clear brow, bulwark of the precious brain,  
 Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and all the while  
 The light soul twines and mingles with the growths  
 Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
 Married, made one with, molten into all  
 The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
 And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
 Far from the diamond fountain by the palms,  
 Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,

Or when the white heats of the blinding noons  
 Beat from the concave sand, yet in him keeps  
 A draught of that sweet fountain that he loves,  
 To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit  
 From bitterness of death

Ye ask me, friends,  
 When I began to love How should I tell you?  
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
 Flow back again unto my slender spring  
 And first of love, tho' every turn and depth  
 Between is clearer in my life than all  
 Its present flow Ye know not what ye ask  
 How should the broad and open flower tell  
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest together  
 In its green sheath, close lapt in silken folds,  
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it seem'd?  
 For young Life knows not when young Life was born,  
 But takes it all for granted neither Love  
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember  
 Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,  
 Looking on her that brought him to the light  
 Or as men know not when they fall asleep  
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
 So know I not when I began to love  
 This is my sum of knowledge—that my love  
 Grew with myself—say rather, was my growth,  
 My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,  
 My outward circling air wherewith I breathe,  
 Which yet upholds my life, and evermore  
 Is to me daily life and daily death  
 For how should I have lived and not have loved?

Can ye take off the sweetness from the  
flower,  
The colour and the sweetness from the  
rose,  
And place them by themselves; or set  
apart  
Their motions and their brightness from  
the stars,  
And then point out the flower or the star?  
Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,  
And tell me where I am? 'Tis even  
thus.

In that I live I love, because I love  
I live whate'er is fountain to the one  
Is fountain to the other; and whene'er  
Our God unknots the riddle of the one,  
There is no shade or fold of mystery  
Swathing the other

Many, many years,  
(For they seem many and my most of life,  
And well I could have linger'd in that  
porch,  
So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place,)  
In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
The flush and dawn of youth, we lived  
together,  
Apart, alone together on those hills

Before he saw my day my father died,  
And he was happy that he saw it not,  
But I and the first daisy on his grave  
From the same clay came into light at  
once

As Love and I do number equal years,  
So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
How like each other was the birth of  
each!

On the same morning, almost the same  
hour,  
Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
(Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we were  
born.

How like each other was the birth of each!  
The sister of my mother—she that bore  
Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
With its true-touched pulses in the flow  
And hourly visitation of the blood,  
Sent notes of preparation manifold,

And mellow'd echoes of the outer world—  
My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
One twofold mightier than the other was,  
In giving so much beauty to the world,  
And so much wealth as God had charged  
her with—

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
Left her own life with it, and dying thus,  
Crown'd with her highest act the placid  
face

And breathless body of her good deeds  
past.

So were we born, so orphan'd She  
was motherless  
And I without a father So from each  
Of those two pillars which from earth  
uphold  
Our childhood, one had fallen away and  
all

The careful burthen of our tender years  
Trembled upon the other He that gave  
Her life, to me delightfully fulfill'd  
All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
Of watchful care and trembling tender  
ness

He waked for both he pray'd for both  
he slept  
Dreaming of both nor was his love the  
less

Because it was divided, and shot forth  
Boughs on each side, laden with whole-  
some shade,

Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
And sang aloud the matin-song of life

She was my foster-sister on one arm  
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
Wander'd, the while we rested one soft  
lap

Pillow'd us both a common light of eyes  
Was on us as we lay - our baby lips,  
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
The stream of life, one stream, one life,  
one blood,

One sustenance, which, still as thought  
grew large,  
Still larger moulding all the house of  
thought,

Made all our tastes and fancies like,  
 perhaps—  
 All—all but one, and strange to me,  
 and sweet,  
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that  
 whitsoe'er  
 Our general mother meant for me alone,  
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us  
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
 I shared with her in whom myself remains  
 As was our childhood, so our infancy,  
 They tell me, was a very miracle  
 Of fellow feeling and communion  
 They tell me that we would not be alone,—  
 We cried when we were parted, when I  
 wept,  
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow, that we  
 loved  
 The sound of one another's voices more  
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and  
 learn'd  
 To hush in tune together, that we slept  
 In the same cradle always, face to face  
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing  
 lip,  
 Folding each other, breathing on each  
 other,  
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each  
 other  
 They should have added), till the morning  
 light  
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
 pane  
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke  
 To gaze upon each other If this be  
 true,  
 At thought of which my whole soul  
 languishes  
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath  
 —as tho'  
 A man in some still garden should infuse  
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and over-  
 full  
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
 It fall on its own thorns—if this be true—  
 And that way my wish leads me evermore  
 Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,  
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul

Doth question'd memory answer not, no  
 tell  
 Of this our earliest, our closest drawn,  
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
 mony?  
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,  
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new  
 year  
 Of Being, which with earliest violets  
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
 Fill'd all the March of life!—I will not  
 speak of thee,  
 These have not seen thee, these can never  
 know thee,  
 They cannot understand me Pass we  
 then  
 A term of eighteen years Ye would but  
 laugh,  
 If I should tell you how I hoard in  
 thought  
 The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient  
 crones,  
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,  
 Which are as gems set in my memory,  
 Because she learnt them with me, or  
 what use  
 To know her father left us just before  
 The daffodil was blown? or how we  
 found  
 The dead man cast upon the shore? All  
 this  
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds  
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of  
 mine  
 Is traced with flame Move with me to  
 the event  
 There came a glorious morning, such a  
 one  
 As dawns but once a season Mercury  
 On such a morning would have flung  
 himself  
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
 balanced wings  
 To some tall mountain when I said to  
 her,  
 'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered,  
 'Ay,  
 And men to soar' for as that other  
 gazed,  
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,

The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,  
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
 stood,  
 When first we came from out the pines at  
 noon,  
 With hands for caves, uplooking and  
 almost  
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
 heaven,  
 So bathed we were in brilliance Never  
 yet  
 Before or after have I known the spring  
 Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
 Into the middle summer, for that dry  
 Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged  
 the winds  
 With spiced May-sweets from bound to  
 bound, and blew  
 Fresh fire into the sun, and from within  
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent his  
 soul  
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-  
 off  
 His mountain altars, his high hills, with  
 flame  
 Wilder and purer

Thro' the rocks we wound  
 The great pine shook with lonely sounds  
 of joy  
 That came on the sea-wind As moun-  
 tain streams  
 Our bloods ran free the sunshine seem'd  
 to brood  
 More warmly on the heart than on the  
 brow  
 We often paused, and, looking back, we  
 saw  
 The clefts and openings in the mountains  
 fill'd  
 With the blue valley and the glistening  
 brooks,  
 And all the low dark groves, a land of  
 love!  
 A land of promise, a land of memory,  
 A land of promise flowing with the milk  
 And honey of delicious memories!

And down to sea, and far as eye could  
 ken,  
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy  
 Land,  
 Still growing holier as you near'd the  
 bay,  
 For there the Temple stood

When we had reach'd  
 The grassy platform on some hill, I  
 stoop'd,  
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
 brows  
 And mine made garlands of the selfsame  
 flower,  
 Which she took smiling, and with my  
 work thus  
 Crown'd her clear forehead Once or  
 twice she told me  
 (For I remember all things) to let grow  
 The flowers that run poison in their veins  
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the world  
 I then playfully she gave herself the lie—  
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful,  
 So, brother, pluck and spare not' So  
 I wore  
 Ev'n the dull blooded poppy-stem, 'whose  
 flower,  
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns  
 himself  
 Above the naked poisons of his heart  
 In his old age' A graceful thought of  
 hers  
 Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how like  
 a nymph  
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd!  
 how native  
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I  
 grazed  
 My coronet slowly, disentrained itself  
 And fell between us both, tho' while I  
 grazed  
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of  
 bliss  
 That strike across the soul in prayer, and  
 show us  
 That we are surely heard Methought a  
 light



Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and  
stood

A solid glory on her bright black hair,  
A light methought broke from her dark,  
dark eyes,

And shot itself into the singing winds,  
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white  
robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
My footsteps on the mountains

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of  
Woe'

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
The yawning of an earthquake cloven  
chasm

And thence one night, when all the winds  
were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)  
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd  
himself

Into the dizzy depth below Below,  
Fierce in the strength of far descent, a  
stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
chasm

The path was perilous, loosely strown  
with crags

We mounted slowly, yet to both there  
came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking down  
On all that had look'd down on us, and  
joy

In breathing never heaven, and joy to  
me,

High over all the wre-circled earth,  
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself,  
And more than joy that I to her became  
Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
brows,

Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,  
And steep down walls of battlemented rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and steam  
of gold,

And over all the great wood noting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush—  
and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the west,  
A purple range of mountain-cones, be-  
tween

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea

At length

Descending from the point and standing  
both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from  
beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,  
We paused amid the splendour All the  
west

And ev'n unto the middle south was  
ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom The  
sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave,  
shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of light  
Unparallel'd On the other side, the  
moon,

Half melted into thin blue air, stood still,  
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,  
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes  
To indue his lustre, most unloverlike,  
Since in his absence full of light and joy,  
And giving light to others But this  
most,

Next to her presence whom I loved so  
well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart  
As to my outward hearing the loud  
stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the crag  
(A visible link unto the home of my  
heart),

Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
the sea  
Parting my own loved mountains was  
received,  
Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy  
Of that small bay, which out to open  
main  
Glow'd intermingling close beneath the  
sun.  
Spirits of Love! that little hour was bound  
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
thee  
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
and the earth  
They fell on became hallow'd evermore

We turn'd our eyes met. hers were  
bright, and mine  
Were dim with floating tears, that shot  
the sunset  
In lightnings round me; and my name  
was borne  
Upon her breath Henceforth my name  
has been  
A hallow'd memory like the names of old,  
A center'd, glory-circled memory,  
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
Exchange or currency - and in that hour  
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden  
mist  
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
shatter it,  
Waver'd and floated—which was less  
than Hope,  
Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
Hope,  
But which was more and higher than all  
Hope,  
Because all other Hope had lower aim,  
Even that this name to which her gracious  
lips  
Did lend such gentle utterance, this one  
name,  
In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
wreath  
(How lovelier, nobler then!) her life, her  
love,  
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart  
and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd  
henceforth  
The Hill of Hope,' and I replied, 'O  
sister,  
My will is one with thine; the Hill of  
Hope'  
Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak I could not speak my  
love  
Love lieth deep Love dwells not in lip-  
depths  
Love wraps his wings on either side the  
heart,  
Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
So that they pass not to the shrine of  
sound  
Else had the life of that delighted hour  
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
Of Love, but how should Earthly mea-  
sure mete  
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited  
Love,  
Who scarce can tune his high majestic  
sense  
Unto the thundersong that wheels the  
spheres,  
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
And flowing odour of the spacious air,  
Scarce housed within the circle of this  
Earth,  
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
Which pass with that which breathes  
them? Sooner Earth  
Might go round Heaven, and the strait  
girth of Time  
Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy  
hour,  
Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!  
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
Thy coronal of glory like a God,  
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
Who walk before thee, ever turning round  
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
With dwelling on the light and depth of  
thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among  
hours !

Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
For bliss stood round me like the light of  
Heaven,—

Had I died then, I had not known the  
death,

Yea had the Power from whose right  
hand the light

Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand  
floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-  
ences,

Whereof to all that draw the wholesome  
air,

Somewhile the one must overflow the  
other,

Then had he stemm'd my day with night,  
and driven

My current to the fountain whence it  
sprang,—

Even his own abiding excellence—  
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom

had fall'n

Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,

Which seeming for the moment due to  
death,

And dipping his head low beneath the  
verge,

Yet bearing round about him his own day,  
In confidence of unabated strength,

Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from  
light to light,

And holdeth his undimmed forehead far  
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud

We trod the shadow of the downward  
hill,

We past from light to dark On the  
other side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,  
Which none have fathom'd If you go

far in  
(The country people rumour) you may  
hear

The moaning of the woman and the child,  
Shut in the secret chambers of the rock

I too have heard a sound—perchance of  
streams

Running far on within its inmost halls,  
The home of darkness, but the cavern  
mouth,

Half overruled with a wanton weed,  
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that  
passing lightly

Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
Is presently received in a sweet grave

Of eglantines, a place of burial  
Far lovelier than its cradle, for unseen,

But taken with the sweetness of the place,  
It makes a constant bubbling melody

That drowns the nearer echoes Lower  
down

Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding,  
leaves

Low banks of yellow sand, and from the  
woods

That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-  
presses,—

Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe.  
That men plant over graves

Hither we came,  
And sitting down upon the golden moss,

Held converse sweet and low—low con-  
verse sweet,

In which our voices bore least part The  
wind

Told a love-tale beside us, how he woo'd  
The waters, and the waters answering

lisp'd  
To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,

Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
To utterance of passion Ye cannot

share  
Fancy so fair as is this memory

Methought all excellence that ever was  
Had drawn herself from many thousand

years,  
And all the separate Edens of this earth,

To centre in this place and time I  
listen'd,

And her words stole with most prevailing  
sweetness

Into my heart, as thronging fancies come  
To boys and girls when summer days are

new,  
And soul and heart and body are all at  
ease

What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,  
And I was as the brother of her blood,  
And by that name I moved upon her  
breath;

Dear name, which had too much of near-  
ness in it

And heralded the distance of this time!  
At first her voice was very sweet and low,  
As if she were afraid of utterance;

But in the onward current of her speech,  
(As echoes of the hollow-unkled brooks  
are hushed),

Her words did of their meaning borrow  
as well,

Her catch did catch the colour of her  
words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but  
hear;

My heart paused—my roused eyelids  
would not fall,

But still I kept my eyes upon the sky,  
I seem'd the only part of Time's noon still,  
And saw the motion of all other things,  
While her words, syllable by syllable,  
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not  
to speak,

But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
What marvel my Camilla told me all  
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love—  
'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd'—Even  
then the stars

Did tremble in their stations as I gazed,  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
Nowish—nohope—Hope was not wholly  
dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of  
Death,—

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
No longer in the dearest sense of mine—  
For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
And all the maiden empire of her mind,  
Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
There, where I hoped myself to reign as  
king,

There, where that day I crown'd myself  
as king,

There in my realm and even on my throne,

As if then it seem'd as tho' a link  
Of some tight chain within my inmost  
frame

Was riven in twain—that life I heeded not  
I low'd from me, and the darkness of the  
grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter night,  
Did swallow up my vision, at her feet,  
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death

Then had the earth beneath me yawn-  
ing cloven

With such a sound as when an iceberg  
splits

From cope to base—had Heaven from  
all her doors,

With all her golden thresholds clashing,  
roll'd

Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as  
dead

Mute, blind and motionless as then I lay,  
Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
for me!

Mute, for henceforth what use were  
words to me!

Blind, for the day was as the night to  
me!

The night to me was kinder than the  
day,

The night in pity took away my day,  
Because my grief as yet was newly born  
Of eyes too weak to look upon the light,  
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
Fruit Life was startled from the tender  
love

Of him she brooded over—Would I had  
lain

Until the plumed ivy-tress had wound  
Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier  
had driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpauning  
brows,

Learning its roses on my faded eyes  
The wind had blown above me, and the  
rain

Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded snake  
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
Love,

But I had been at rest for evermore

Long time entrancement held me All  
 too soon  
 Life (like a wanton too officious friend,  
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
 With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
 Entering all the avenues of sense  
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
 With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.  
 And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
 brook  
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
 to hear  
 Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
 hears,  
 Who with his head below the surface  
 dropt  
 Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
 Of the confused floods, and dimly knows  
 His head shall rise no more and then  
 came in  
 The white light of the weery moon  
 above,  
 Diffused and molten into flaky cloud  
 Was my sight drunk that it did shape to  
 me  
 Him who should own that name? Were  
 it not well  
 If so be that the echo of that name  
 Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
 A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
 It should attach to? Phuntom!—had  
 the ghastliest  
 That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
 The foul steam of the grave to thicken  
 by it,  
 There in the shuddering moonlight  
 brought its face  
 And what it has for eyes as close to  
 mine  
 As he did—better that than his, than he  
 The friend, the neighbour, Lionel, the  
 beloved,  
 The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
 The low-voiced, tender spirited Lionel,  
 All joy, to whom my agony was a joy  
 O how her choice did leap forth from his  
 eyes!  
 O how her love did clothe itself in smiles  
 About his lips' and—not one moment's  
 grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon  
 my head  
 To come my way! to twit me with the  
 cause!  
 Was not the land as free thro' all her  
 ways  
 To him as me? Was not his wont to  
 walk  
 Between the going light and growing  
 night?  
 Had I not learnt my loss before he came?  
 Could that be more because he came my  
 way?  
 Why should he not come my way if he  
 would?  
 And yet to night, to night—when all my  
 wealth  
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell  
 Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he come  
 my way  
 Robed in those robes of light I must not  
 wear,  
 With that great crown of beams about his  
 brows—  
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
 To tell him of the bliss he had with  
 God—  
 Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
 That scarce can wait the reading of the  
 will  
 Before he takes possession? Was mine  
 a mood  
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
 A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with  
 Grief,  
 She took the body of my past delight,  
 Narded and swathed and brim'd it for  
 herself,  
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
 Never to rise again I was led mute  
 Into her temple like a sacrifice,  
 I was the High Priest in her holiest  
 place,  
 Not to be loudly broken in upon  
 Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as  
 these well-nigh  
 O'erbore the limits of my brain but he

Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm up-  
 stay'd  
 I thought it was an adder's fold, and once  
 I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,  
 Being so feeble she bent above me, too,  
 Wan was her cheek, for whatsoe'er of  
 blight  
 Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made  
 The red rose there a pale one—and her  
 eyes—  
 I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
 tears—  
 And some few drops of that distressful  
 ran  
 Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
 moved,  
 Drooping and benten by the breeze, and  
 brush'd  
 My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
 For in the sudden anguish of her heart  
 Loosed from their simple thrall they had  
 flow'd abroad,  
 And floated on and parted round her neck,  
 Mantling her form halfway She, when  
 I woke,  
 Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
 and ask'd,  
 Unanswer'd, since I spake not, for the  
 sound  
 Of that dear voice so musically low,  
 And now first heard with any sense of  
 pain,  
 As it had taken life away before,  
 Choked all the syllables, that strove to  
 rise  
 From my full heart

The blissful lover, too,  
 From his great hoard of happiness dis-  
 till'd  
 Some drops of solace, like a vain rich  
 man,  
 That, having always prosper'd in the  
 world,  
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
 words  
 To hearts wounded for ever, yet, in  
 truth,  
 Fair speech was his and delicate of  
 phrase,

Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
 dress'd  
 More to the inward than the outward  
 ear,  
 As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the  
 green  
 Of the dead spring but mine was wholly  
 dead,  
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for  
 me  
 Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
 wrong?  
 And why was I to darken then pure love,  
 If, as I found, they two did love each  
 other,  
 Because my own was darken'd? Why  
 was I  
 To cross between their happy star and  
 them?  
 To stand a shadow by their shining doors,  
 And vex them with my darkness? Did  
 I love her?  
 Ye know that I did love her, to this  
 present  
 My full-orb'd love has waned not Did  
 I love her,  
 And could I look upon her tearful eyes?  
 What had *she* done to weep? Why  
 should *she* weep?  
 O innocent of spirit—let my heart  
 Break rather—whom the gentlest airs of  
 Heaven  
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.  
 Her love did murder mine? What then?  
 She deem'd  
 I wore a brother's mind she call'd me  
 brother  
 She told me all her love she shall not  
 weep

The brightness of a burning thought,  
 awhile  
 In battle with the glooms of my dark will,  
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe  
 Reflex of action Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she lov'd,

And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving  
made

The happy and the unhappy love, that He  
Would hold the hand of blessing over them,  
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his  
bride!

Let them so love that men and boys may  
say,

'Lo' how they love each other!' till  
their love

Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
Known, when their faces are forgot in  
the land—

One golden dream of love, from which  
may death

Awake them with heaven's music in a life  
More living to some happier happiness,  
Swallowing its precedent in victory

And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—  
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,  
They will but sicken the sick plant the  
more

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,  
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do,  
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream  
but how

I could have loved thee, had there been  
none else

To love as lovers, loved again by thee

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
spake,

When I beheld her weep so ruefully,  
For sure my love should ne'er induce the  
front

And mask of Hate, who lives on others'  
moans

Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
drioughts,

And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
Hate,

And Hate is strange beneath the roof of  
Love

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these  
tears

Shed for the love of Love, for tho' mine  
image,

The subject of thy power, be cold in her,

Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
source

Of these sad tears, and feeds their down  
ward flow

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
death,

Received unto himself a part of blame,  
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,  
Who, when the woful sentence hath been  
past,

And all the clearness of his fame hath gone  
Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,  
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
awaked,

And looking round upon his tearful friends,  
Forthwith and in his agony conceives

A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime—  
For whence without some guilt should  
such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
abysm

Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,  
Who never hail'd another—was there  
one?

There might be one—one other, worth  
the life

That made it sensible So that hour died  
Like odour rapt into the winged wind  
Borne into alien lands and far away

There be some hearts so airy built,  
that they,

They—when their love is wreck'd—if  
Love can wreck—

On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride  
highly

Above the perilous seas of Change and  
Chance,

Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheer  
fulness,

As the tall ship, that many a dreary year  
Knot to some dismal sandbank far at sea,  
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,  
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous  
wave

For me—what light, what gleam on those  
black ways

Where Love could walk with brinish'd  
Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair,  
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the  
 neck of Hope,  
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew  
 in her breath  
 In that close kiss, and drunk her  
 whisper'd tales  
 They said that Love would die when  
 Hope was gone,  
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
 after Hope;  
 At last she sought out Memory, and they  
 trod  
 The same old paths where Love had  
 walk'd with Hope,  
 And Memory fed the soul of Love with  
 tears

## II

FROM that time forth I would not see  
 her more,  
 But many weary moons I lived alone—  
 Alone, and in the heart of the great forest  
 Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea  
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,  
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
 sands  
 Insensibly I drew her name, until  
 The meaning of the letters shot into  
 My brain, anon the wanton billow wash'd  
 Them over, till they faded like my love  
 The hollow caverns heard me—the black  
 brooks  
 Of the midforest heard me—the soft  
 winds,  
 Laden with thistledown and seeds of  
 flowers,  
 Paused in their course to hear me, for my  
 voice  
 Was all of thee the merry linnet knew  
 me,  
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly  
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire  
 The rough brier tore my bleeding palms,  
 the hemlock,  
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I  
 past,  
 Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,  
 Nor bruised the wildbird's egg

Was this the end?  
 Why grew we then together in one plot?  
 Why fed we from one fountain? drew  
 one sun?  
 Why were our mothers' branches of one  
 stem?  
 Why were we one in all things, save in  
 that  
 Where to have been one had been the  
 cope and crown  
 Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that same  
 nearness  
 Were father to this distance, and that  
 one  
 Vauntcouter to this double? if Affection  
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd  
 out  
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill  
 Where last we roam'd together, for the  
 sound  
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the  
 wind  
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells,  
 Sometimes  
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
 cones  
 That spired above the wood, and with  
 mad hand  
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy  
 screen,  
 I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,  
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd from  
 my sight  
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
 tines  
 And all the fragments of the living rock  
 (Huge blocks, which some old trembling  
 of the world  
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they  
 fell  
 Half-digging their own graves) these in  
 my agony  
 Did I make bare of all the golden moss,  
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
 spring  
 Had livered them all over In my  
 brain



The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,  
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist. my blood  
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs;  
 The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,  
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses,  
 And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,  
 As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack  
 But over the deep graves of Hope and Fear,  
 And all the broken palaces of the Past,  
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-shock'd,—  
 Hung round with ragged ruins and burning folds,—  
 Embathing all with wild and woful hues,  
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses  
 Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
 And fused together in the tyrannous light—  
 Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no more,  
 Some one had told me she was dead,  
 and ask'd  
 If I would see her burial then I seem'd  
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow borne  
 With more than mortal swiftness, I ran down  
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
 The rear of a procession, curving round  
 The silver-sheer'd bay in front of which  
 Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
 A broad earth sweeping pall of whitest lawn,  
 Wreathed round the bier with garlands  
 in the distance,  
 From out the yellow woods upon the hill  
 Look'd forth the summit and the pinnacles  
 Of a gray steeple—thence at intervals

A low bell tolling All the pageantry,  
 Save those six virgins which upheld the bier,  
 Were stoled from head to foot in flowing black,  
 One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his brow,  
 And he was loud in weeping and in praise  
 Of her, we follow'd a strong sympathy  
 Shook all my soul I flung myself upon him  
 In tears and cries - I told him all my love,  
 How I had loved her from the first, whereat  
 He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow drew back  
 His hand to push me from him; and the face,  
 The very face and form of Lionel  
 Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost  
 brain,  
 And at his feet I seem'd to fount and fall,  
 To fall and die away I could not rise  
 Albeit I strove to follow They past on  
 The lordly Phantasms' in their floating folds  
 They past and were no more - but I had fallen  
 Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Always the inaudible invisible thought,  
 Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
 Shaped by the audible and visible,  
 Moulded the audible and visible,  
 All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and wind,  
 Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brun;  
 The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,  
 The mountain, the three cypresses, the cave,  
 Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the moon  
 Below black firs, when silent-creeping winds  
 Laid the long night in silver streaks and bars,  
 Were wrought into the tissue of my dream  
 The moanings in the forest, the lowa brook,

Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr

Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to me  
And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
Like sounds without the twilight realm  
of dreams,

Which wander round the bases of the  
hills,

And murmur at the low dropt eyes of  
sleep,

Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
To caves and shows of Death whether  
the mind,

With some revenge—even to itself un-  
known,—

Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering view'd  
had been

Extremest pain, or that the clear-eyed  
Spirit,

Being blunted in the Present, grew at  
length

Prophetic and prescient of white'er  
The Future had in store or that which  
most

Enchans belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
Was of so wide a compass it took in  
All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
Anguish intolerable

The day waned,

Alone I sat with her about my brow  
Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
Of silver-chorded tones her lips were  
sunder'd

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke  
in light

Like morning from her eyes—her elo-  
quent eyes,

(As I have seen them many a hundred  
times)

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine  
down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendours As a  
vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
ground,

Confined on points of faith, when strength  
is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse  
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,  
And with the excess of sweetness and of  
awe,

Makes the heart tremble, and the sight  
run over

Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes  
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever  
stood

Within the magic cirque of memory,  
Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
The edict of the will to reassume  
The semblance of those rare realities  
Of which they were the mirrors Now  
the light

Which was their life, burst through the  
cloud of thought  
Keen, irrepressible

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,  
Hung round with paintings of the sea,  
and one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
Clambering, the mast bent and the riven  
wind

In her sail roaring From the outer day,  
Between the close set ivies came a broad  
And solid beam of isolated light,  
Crowded with driving atoms, and fell  
Slanting upon that picture, from prime  
youth

Well known well loved She drew it  
long ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,  
One morning when the upblown billow  
ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had  
pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
Colour and life it was a bond and seal  
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
smiles,

A monument of childhood and of love ,  
 The poesy of childhood , my lost love  
 Symbol'd in storm We gazed on it  
 together  
 In mute and glad remembrance, and  
 each heart  
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing  
 life  
 The Indian on a still eyed snake, low-  
 couch'd—  
 A beauty which is death ; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
 Began to heave upon that painted sea ,  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
 made the ground  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life  
 And breath and motion, past and flow'd  
 away  
 To those unreal billows round and  
 round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us , mighty  
 gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
 driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark Aloud she  
 shriek'd ,  
 My heart was cloven with pain , I wound  
 my arms  
 About her we whirl'd giddily, the wind  
 Sung , but I clasp'd her without fear  
 her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
 eyes,  
 And parted lips which drank her breath,  
 down-hung  
 The jaws of Death · I, groaning, from  
 me flung  
 Her empty phantom all the sway and  
 whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever

## III

I CAME one day and sat among the  
 stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning  
 cave ,

A morning air, sweet after rain, ran  
 over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and  
 blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of  
 bud  
 And foliage from the dark and dripping  
 woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook and  
 throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
 height  
 The day had grown I know not Then  
 came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his  
 brow  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
 bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the  
 shore  
 Sloped into louder surf those that went  
 with me,  
 And those that held the bier before my  
 face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about the  
 bay,  
 Trod swifter steps , and while I walk'd  
 with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I  
 thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to ring,  
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-  
 bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on  
 peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage  
 bells  
 Then those who led the van, and those  
 in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-  
 chanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the  
 woods  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the  
 blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids . all at once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt , the  
 bells

Lapped into frightful stillness, the surge  
 fell  
 From thunder into whispers, those six  
 mounds  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on the  
 sand  
 Threw down the bier, the woods upon  
 the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping  
 down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew it  
 far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas I turn'd my  
 heart  
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the  
 hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers  
 But she from out her death-lily chrysalis,  
 She from her bier as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my  
 love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her  
 hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose—a  
 light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips—her  
 eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd  
 the hill  
 One hand she reach'd to those that came  
 behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to  
 take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood with  
 me  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down his  
 robes,  
 And claspt her hand in his again the  
 bells  
 Jangled and clung'd again the stormy  
 surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle and the whirling  
 rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance, and  
 fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the  
 woods,

Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant bier  
 There, there, my latest vision—then the  
 event!

## IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.<sup>1</sup>

(Another speaks)

He flies the event he leaves the event  
 to me  
 Poor Julian—how he rush'd away, the  
 bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and  
 heart—  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
 As who should say 'Continue' Well  
 he had  
 One golden hour—of triumph shall I say?  
 Solace at least—before he left his home  
 Would you had seen him in that hour  
 of his!  
 He moved thro' all of it mysteriously—  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close—  
 but now—  
 Whether they were his lady's marriage  
 bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd but Lionel and the girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came  
 again  
 Back to his mother's house among the  
 pines  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains and  
 the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology he would go,  
 Would leave the land for ever, and had  
 gone  
 Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'  
 Some warning—sent divinely—as it  
 seem'd

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio See Introduction, p 476

By that which follow'd — but of this I deem  
 As of the visions that he told—the event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them—tho' he knew it  
 not

And thus he stay'd and would not look  
 at her—  
 No not for months but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bly,  
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and  
 said,  
 Would you could toll me out of life, but  
 found—  
 All softly as his mother broke it to him—  
 A crueller reason than a crazy err,  
 For that low knell tolling his lady dead—  
 Dead—and had lain three days without  
 a pulse  
 All that look'd on her had pronounced  
 her dead  
 And so they bore her (for in Julian's land  
 They never nail a dumb head up in  
 elm),  
 Bore her free faced to the free airs of  
 heaven,  
 And laid her in the vault of her own kin

What did he then? not die he is here  
 and hale—  
 Not plunge headforemost from the moun-  
 tain there,  
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap  
 not he  
 He knew the meaning of the whisper now,  
 Thought that he knew it 'This, I stay'd  
 for this,  
 O love, I have not seen you for so long  
 Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
 I will be all alone with all I love,  
 And kiss her on the lips She is his no  
 more  
 The dead returns to me, and I go down  
 To kiss the dead'

The fancy stirr'd him so  
 He rose and went, and entering the dim  
 vault,

And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
 All round about him that which all will  
 be

The light was but a flash, and went again  
 When at the far end of the vault he saw  
 His lady with the moonlight on her face,  
 Her breast in a shadow-prison, bars  
 Of black and bands of silver, which the  
 moon

Struck from an open grating overhead  
 High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the  
 vault

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to  
 sleep,  
 To rest, to be with her—till the great  
 day  
 Peal'd on us with that music which rights  
 all,  
 And raised us hand in hand' And  
 kneeling there  
 Down in the dreadful dust that once was  
 man,  
 Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
 hearts,  
 Hearts that had beat with such a love as  
 mine—  
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
 her—  
 He softly put his arm about her neck  
 And kiss'd her more than once, till help-  
 less death  
 And silence made him bold—nay, but I  
 wrong him,  
 He revered his dear lady even in  
 death,  
 But, placing his true hand upon her  
 heart,  
 'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not  
 even death  
 Can chill you all at once' then starting,  
 thought  
 His dreams had come again 'Do I  
 wake or sleep?  
 Or am I made immortal, or my love  
 Mortal once more?' It beat—the heart  
 —it beat  
 Faint—but it beat at which his own  
 began

To pulse with such a vehemence that it  
drown'd

The feeble motion underneath his hand  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and  
now

Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she  
was born

There the good mother's kindly minis-  
tering,  
With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
Her fluttering life she rais'd an eye that  
ask'd  
'Where' 'till the things familiar to her  
youth  
Had made a silent answer then she spoke  
'Here' and how came I here?' and  
learning it  
(They told her somewhat rashly as I  
think.)

At once began to wander and to wail,  
'Ay, but you know that you must give  
me back  
Send' bid him come,' but Lionel was  
away—  
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none  
knew where.

'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes'  
—a wail  
That seeming something, yet was nothing,  
born

Not from believing mind, but shatter'd  
nerve,  
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial  
Then, when her own true spirit had  
return'd,

'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none  
but you?  
For you have given me life and love again,  
And none but you yourself shall tell him  
of it,  
And you shall give me back when he  
returns'

'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,  
'here,

And keep yourself, none knowing, to  
yourself,  
And I will do your will I may not stay,  
No, not an hour, but send me notice of  
him

When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love' And faintly she  
replied,

'And I will do *your* will, and none shall  
know'

Not know? with such a secret to be  
known

But all their house was old and loved  
them both,  
And all the house had known the loves  
of both,

Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary  
And then he rode away, but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
There fever seized upon him myself was  
then

Travelling that land, and meant to rest  
an hour,

And sitting down to such a base repast,  
It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was  
vile)

And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
Raving of dead men's dust and beating  
hearts

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
But there from fever and my care of him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us  
yet  
For while we roam'd along the dreary  
coast,

And waited for her message, piece by piece  
I learnt the drearier story of his life,  
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,  
Found that the sudden wail his lady  
made

Dwelt in his fancy did he know her  
worth,

Her beauty even? should he not be taught,  
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we part,  
I with our lover to his native Bay

This love is of the brain, the mind, the  
soul  
*That* makes the sequel pure, tho' some  
of us

Beginning at the sequel know no more  
Not such am I and yet I say the bird  
That will not hear my call, however  
sweet,

But if my neighbour whistle answers  
him—

What matter? there are others in the  
wood

Yet when I saw her (and I thought him  
crazed,

Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of  
hers—

Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes  
alone,

But all from these to where she touch'd  
on earth,

For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms  
'Kiss him,' she said 'You gave me  
life again

He, but for you, had never seen it once  
His other father you! Kiss him, and then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart  
his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
there

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him  
By that great love they both had borne  
the dead,

To come and revel for one hour with him  
Before he left the land for evermore,  
And then to friends—they were not many  
—who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of  
his,

And bade them to a banquet of farewells

And Julian made a solemn feast I  
never

Sat at a costlier, for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a  
wood,

Not such as here—in equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;  
and beneath,

Hearlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
Chalice and silver, wines that, Heaven  
knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
sun,

And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round in  
gold—

Others of glass as costly—some with  
gems

No cable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah  
heavens!

Why need I tell you all?—suffice to say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest and they  
the guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's  
eyes

(I told you that he had his golden hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
And that resolved self-exile from a land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n  
than rich,

But rich as for the nuptials of a king

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall  
 Two great funereal curtains, looping down,  
 Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
 About a picture of his lady, taken  
 Some years before, and filling hid the frame.  
 And just above the parting was a lamp  
 So the sweet figure folded round with night  
 Seem'd 'stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate  
 and drank,  
 And nought—the wines being of such  
 nobleness—  
 Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
 And something weird and wild about it all  
 What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,  
 Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and anon  
 A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
 Ansing, show'd he drank beyond his use,  
 And when the feast was near an end, he said

'There is a custom in the Orient,  
 friends—  
 I read of it in Persia—when a man  
 Will honour those who feast with him,  
 he brings  
 And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
 Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
 Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be  
 This custom—'

Pausing here a moment, all  
 The guests broke in upon him with  
 meeting hands  
 And cries about the banquet—'Beautiful'  
 Who could desire more beauty at a feast?

The lover answer'd, 'There is more  
 than one  
 Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
 Before my time, but hear me to the close  
 This custom steps yet further when the  
 guest  
 Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.

For after he hath shown him gems or gold,  
 He brings and sets before him in rich  
 guise  
 That which is thence as beautiful as these,  
 The beauty that is dearest to his heart—  
 "O my heart's lord, would I could show  
 you," he says,  
 "E'en my heart too" And I propose  
 to-night  
 To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
 And my heart too

'But solve me first a doubt  
 I knew a man, nor many years ago,  
 He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
 His master more than all on earth beside  
 He falling sick, and seeming close on  
 death,  
 His master would not wait until he died,  
 But bid his menials bear him from the  
 door  
 And leave him in the public way to die  
 I knew another, not so long ago,  
 Who found the dying servant, took him  
 home,  
 And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
 his life  
 I ask you now, should this first master  
 claim  
 His service, whom does it belong to?  
 him  
 Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
 his life?'

This question, so flung down before  
 the guests,  
 And balanced either way by each, at  
 length  
 When some were doubtful how the law  
 would hold,  
 Was handed over by consent of all  
 To one who had not spoken, Lionel

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
 phrase  
 And he beginning languidly—his loss  
 Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as he  
 went,  
 Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
 Affirming that as long as either lived,



By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
The service of the one so saved was due  
All to the saviour—adding, with a smile,  
The first for many weeks—a semi-smile  
As at a strong conclusion—'body and  
soul  
And life and limbs, all his to woe, I knew I'

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
To bring Camilla down before me in all  
And crossing her own picture as a carie,  
And looking as much lovelier as I care,  
Is lovelier than all others—on her head  
A diamond circlet, and from under this  
A veil, that seemed no more than gilded  
air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern prize  
With seeds of gold—so, with that grace  
of hers,

Slow moving as a wave against the wind,  
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—  
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,  
The younger Julian, who himself was  
crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as himself  
And over all her babe and her the jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked  
them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
So she came in—I am long in telling it  
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
Sad, sweet, and strange together—flor'd  
in—

While all the guests in mute amazement  
rose—

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
Before the board, there paused and stood,  
her breast

Hard heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel  
But him she carried, him nor lights nor  
feet

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men, who  
cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide  
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd  
world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw

'My guests,' said Julian 'you are  
he would now

Laid to the uttermost in her behold  
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me'  
Then saying it as sign to eat ourselves,  
Led his guest lady to chair of state  
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
Live, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him terrible too,  
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so  
like

She never been sister—I knew none  
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so  
like'

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she  
knew

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and  
was numb

And then came other questions if she  
came

I from foreign lands and still she said no  
speech

Another, if the boy were hers—but she  
To all the questions answer'd not a word,  
Which made the amazement more, till  
one of them

Said, shuddering 'Her spectre!' But  
his friend

Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken to  
Terrible play, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb!

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all  
'She is but dumb, because in her you  
see

That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,

Obedient to her second master now,  
Which will not last—I have here to-night  
a guest

So bound to me by common love and  
loss—

What shall I bind him more? in his  
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest to  
me,

Not only showing? and he himself pronounced  
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to give  
 'Now all be dumb, and promise all of you  
 Not to break in on what I say by word  
 Or whisper, while I show you all my heart'  
 And then began the story of his love  
 As here to day, but not so wordily—  
 The passionate moment would not suffer that—  
 Past thro' his visions to the burial, thence  
 Down to this last strange hour in his own hall,  
 And then rose up, and with him all his guests  
 Once more as by enchantment, all but he,  
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
 And sat as if in chains—to whom he said  
 'Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife,  
 And were it only for the giver's sake,  
 And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,  
 Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
 Lest there be none left here to bring her back  
 I leave this land for ever' Here he ceased  
 Then taking his dear lady by one hand,  
 And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
 He slowly brought them both to Lionel  
 And there the widower husband and dead wife  
 Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather seem'd  
 Forsome new death than for a lifernew'd,  
 Whereat the very babe began to wail,  
 At once they turn'd, and caught and brought him in  
 To their charm'd circle, and, half killing him  
 With kisses, round him closed and claspt again  
 But Lionel, when at last he freed himself  
 From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
 All over glowing with the sun of life,  
 And love, and boundless thanks—the sight of this

So frighted our good friend, that turning to me  
 And saying, 'It is over let us go'—  
 There were our horses ready at the doors—  
 We bad them no farewell, but mounting these  
 He past for ever from his native land,  
 And I with him, my Julian, back to mine

## TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIRD Ally whose name is one with mine,  
 Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,  
 Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
 O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
 Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
 Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.  
 M<sup>c</sup>'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

## THE FIRST QUARREL

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

I  
 'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure  
 it 'll all come right,'  
 But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks  
 so wan an' so white  
 Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't  
 to wait for long  
 Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry—No,  
 no, you are doing me wrong!  
 Harry and I were married the boy can  
 hold up his head,  
 The boy was born in wedlock, but after  
 my man was dead,  
 I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I  
 work an' I wait to the end  
 I am all alone in the world, an' you are  
 my only friend

II

Doctor, if you can wait, I'll tell you the  
 tale o' my life  
 When Harry an' I were children, he call'd  
 me his own little wife,

I was happy when I was with him, an'  
 sorry when he was away,  
 An' when we play'd together, I loved him  
 better than play,  
 He workt me the daisy chain—he made  
 me the cowslip ball,  
 He fought the boys that were rude, an' I  
 loved him better than all  
 Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at  
 home in disgrace,  
 I never could quarrel with Harry—I had  
 but to look in his face

## III

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's  
 kin, that had need  
 Of a good stout lad at his farm, he sent,  
 an' the father agreed,  
 So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire  
 farm for years an' for years,  
 I walked with him down to the quay,  
 poor lad, an' we parted in tears  
 The boat was beginning to move, we  
 heard them a-ringing the bell,  
 'I'll never love any but you, God bless  
 you, my own little Nell'

## IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he  
 came to harm,  
 There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with  
 him up at the farm,  
 One had deceived her an' left her alone  
 with her sin an' her shame,  
 And so she was wicked with Harry, the  
 girl was the most to blame

## V

And years went over till I that was little  
 had grown so tall,  
 The men would say of the maids, 'Our  
 Nelly's the flower of 'em all'  
 I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught  
 myself all I could  
 To make a good wife for Harry, when  
 Harry came home for good.

## VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
 happy too,  
 For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll  
 never love any but you,'

'I'll never love any but you' the morning  
 song of the lark,  
 'I'll never love any but you' the nightin-  
 gale's hymn in the dark

## VII

And Harry came home at last, but he  
 look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
 Vext me a bit, till he told me that so  
 many years had gone by,  
 I had grown so handsome and tall—that  
 I might ha' forgot him somehow—  
 For he thought—there were other lads—  
 he was fear'd to look at me now

## VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we were  
 married o' Christmas day,  
 Married among the red berries, an' all as  
 merry as May—  
 Those were the pleasant times, my house  
 an' my man were my pride,  
 We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a  
 sailing with wind an' tide

## IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he  
 tried the villages round,  
 So Harry went over the Solent to see if  
 work could be found,  
 An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work,  
 little wife, so far as I know,  
 I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss  
 you before I go'

## X

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't  
 he coming that day?  
 An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
 push'd in a corner away,  
 It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
 letter along wi' the rest,  
 I had better ha' put my naked hand in a  
 hornets' nest.

## XI

'Sweetheart'—thus was the letter—thus  
 was the letter I read—  
 'You promised to find me work near you,  
 an' I wish I was dead—

Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
haven't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away,  
an' I wish that I had'

## XII.

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant  
times that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry—  
quarrel—the first an' the last

## XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the  
letter that drove me wild,  
An' he told it me all at once, as simple as  
any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I did  
wi' my single life?

I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to  
his wife,

An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst' 'Then,'  
I said, 'I'm none o' the best'

An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love?  
Come, come, little wife, let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no need  
to make such a stir'

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said  
'You were keeping with her,

When I was a-loving you all along an' the  
same as before'

An' he didn't speak for a while an' he  
anger'd me more and more

Then he patted my hand in his gentle  
way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said,  
'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come agains, an' *she*—  
in her shame an' her sin—

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I  
die o' my lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I  
hate her—an' I hate you!'

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha'  
beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,  
when I were so crazy wi' spite,

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right'

## XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I  
watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard, he was all  
wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never  
said on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he  
came to bid me goodbye

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but  
that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss  
me before I go?'

## XV

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her—  
if you will,' I said—

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must  
ha' been light w' my head—

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!—I  
didn't know well what I meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he  
turn'd *his* face an' he went

## XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten  
my work to do,

You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I  
never loved any but you,

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for  
what *she* wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-  
night by the boat'

## XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought  
of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame, he was  
always kind to me

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right'—

An' the boat went down that night—the  
boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH.

## 17—

## I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind  
over land and sea—

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother,  
come out to me'

Why should he call me to night, when he  
knows that I cannot go?  
For the downs are as bright as day, and  
the full moon stares at the snow

## II

We should be seen, my dear, they would  
spy us out of the town.  
The loud black nights for us, and the  
storm rushing over the down,  
When I cannot see my own hand, but am  
led by the creak of the chain,  
And grovel and grope for my son till I  
find myself drenched with the rain

## III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was  
there left to fall?  
I have taken them home, I have number'd  
the bones, I have hidden them all  
What am I saying? and what are *you*?  
do you come as a spy?  
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the  
tree falls so must it lie

## IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
*you*—what have you heard?  
Why did you sit so quiet? *you* never have  
spoken a word  
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none  
of their spies—  
But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes

## V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,  
The blast and the burning shame and the  
bitter frost and the fright?  
I have done it, while you were asleep—  
*you* were only made for the day  
I have gather'd my baby together—and  
now *you* may go your way

## VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit  
by an old dying wife  
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have  
only an hour of life

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he  
went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he  
never has told me a lie

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once  
when he was but a child—

'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said,  
he was always so wild—

And idle—and couldn't be idle—my  
Willy—he never could rest

The King should have made him a soldier,  
he would have been one of his best

## VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and  
they never would let him be good,  
They swore that he dare not rob the mail,  
and he swore that he would,  
And he took no life, but he took one  
purse, and when all was done  
He flung it among his fellows—I'll none  
of it, said my son

## VIII

I came into court to the Judge and the  
lawyers I told them my tale,  
God's own truth—but they kill'd him,  
they kill'd him for robbing the mail  
They hang'd him in chains for a show—  
we had always borne a good name—  
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put  
away—isn't that enough shame?  
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide 'em  
but they set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.  
God 'll pardon the hell-black raven and  
horrible fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer who  
kill'd him and hang'd him there

## IX

And the jailer forced me away I had  
bid him my last goodby,  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell  
'O mother!' I heard him cry  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,  
And now I never shall know it The  
jailer forced me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry  
of my boy that was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up they  
fasten'd me down on my bed  
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the  
dark to me year after year—  
They beat me for that, they beat me—  
you know that I couldn't but hear,  
And then at the last they found I had  
grown so stupid and still  
They let me abroad again—but the  
creatures had worked their will

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of  
my bone was left—  
I stole them all from the lawyers—and  
you, will you call it a theft?—  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me,  
the bones that had laughed and  
had cried—  
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not  
theirs—they had moved in my side

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?  
I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—  
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night  
by the churchyard wall  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I laid  
him in holy ground

XIII

They would scratch him up—they would  
hang him again on the cursed tree  
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—  
let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's  
good will toward men—  
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'  
—let me hear it again,  
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-  
suffering' Yes, O yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder—  
the Saviour lives but to bless

He'll never put on the black cap except  
for the worst of the worst,  
And the first may be last—I have heard it  
in church—and the last may be  
first  
Suffering—O long suffering—yes, as the  
Lord must know,  
Year after year in the mist and the wind  
and the shower and the snow

XIV

I heard, have you? what? they have told  
you he never repented his sin  
How do they know it? are *they* his  
mother? are *you* of his kin?  
Heard! have you ever heard, when the  
storm on the downs began,  
The wind that ill wail like a child and  
the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's  
all very well  
But I go to night to my boy, and I shall  
not find him in Hell  
For I cared so much for my boy that the  
Lord has look'd into my cue,  
And He means me I'm sure to be happy  
with Willy, I know not where

XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul,  
that is all your desire  
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if  
my boy be gone to the fire?  
I have been with God in the dark—go,  
go, you may leave me alone—  
You never have borne a child—you are  
just as hard as a stone

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
that you mean to be kind,  
But I cannot hear what you say for my  
Willy's voice in the wind—  
The snow and the sky so bright—he used  
but to call in the dark,  
And he calls to me now from the church  
and not from the gabbet—for hark!

Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is  
coming—shaking the walls—  
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good  
night I am going He calls

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

### I

WAAIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou  
mun a' sights<sup>1</sup> to tell  
Eh, but I be maain glad to seea tha sa  
'arty an' well  
'Cast awaay on a disolut land wi' a  
vartical soon<sup>2</sup> !'  
Strange fur to goa fur to think wha  
saailors a' seean an' a' doon,  
'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?' I 'a nowt  
but Adam's wine  
What's the 'eat o' this little 'ill side to  
the 'erit o' the line?

### II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?'  
I'll tell tha. Gin  
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goa  
fur it down to the inn  
Naay—fur I be maain glad, but thaw tha  
was niver sa dry,  
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer,  
an' I'll tell tha why

### III

Mea an' thy sister was married, when  
wur it? back-end o' June,  
Ten year sin', and wa'greed as well as a  
fiddle i' tune  
I could fettle and clump owd booots and  
shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
As fer us fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *z* and *j* in this dialect. But since such words as *cratin*, *da'in*, *wha'i*, *ai* (1), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *z* and *j*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in 'wood.

We was busy as beas i' the bloom an' as  
'appy as 'art could think,  
An' then the babby wur burn, and then  
I taakes to the drink

### IV

An' I weant gaainsaay it, my lad, thaw I  
be hafe shaamed on it now,  
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we  
could sing a good song at the Plow,  
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an'  
hurted my huck,<sup>1</sup>  
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes  
slaape down i' the 'squad an' the  
muck  
An' once I fowt wi' the Taailor—not hafe  
ov a man, my lad—  
Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my faace  
like a cat, an' it maade 'er sa mrd  
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,<sup>2</sup>  
an' raated ma, 'Sottin' thy braains  
Guzzlin' an' soakin' an' smoakin' an'  
hawmin'<sup>3</sup> about i' the laanes,  
Soa sow droonk that tha doesn not touch  
thy 'at to the Squire,  
An' I loook'd cock-eyed at my noase an'  
I secad 'im a gittin' o' fire,  
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus  
as droonk as a king,  
Foalks' coostom flitted awaay like a kite  
wi' a brokken string

### V

An' Sally she wesh'd foalks' cloaths to  
keep the wolf fro' the door,  
Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv  
me to drink the moor,  
Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,  
An' I grabb'd the munny she maade, and  
I wear'd it o' liquor, I did

### VI

An' one night I cooms 'oam like a bull  
gotten loose at a faair,  
An' she wur a-waaitin' fo'mma, an' cryin  
and tearin' 'er 'aair,

<sup>1</sup> Hip

<sup>2</sup> Scold.

<sup>3</sup> Lounging

An' I tummled athurt the criadle an'  
 swear'd as I'd break my stick  
 O' furnitur 'ere I' the 'ouse, an' I g'ed  
 our Sally a lick,  
 An' I mash'd the tables an' churs, an'  
 she an' the babby beal'd,<sup>1</sup>  
 Fur I knaw'd my moor what I did nor  
 a mortal beast o' the scald

## VII.

An' when I waaked I' the murnin' I seed  
 that our Sally went laamed  
 Cos' o' the lick as I g'ed 'er, an' I wur  
 dreadful rshaamed;  
 An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>2</sup> an' draggle taail'd  
 in an owd turn gown,  
 An' the babby's face wur'n't wesh'd an'  
 the 'ole 'ouse hupside down

## VIII.

An' then I munded our Sally sa pratty  
 an' neat an' sweet,  
 Straat as a polt an' clean as a flower fro'  
 'ead to feet.  
 An' then I munded the fust kiss I g'ed  
 'er by Thursby thurn,  
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a  
 Sunday at murn,  
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eard 'im a-mountin'  
 oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
 shined like a sparkle o' fire  
 'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I  
 can see 'im?' an' I  
 Secad nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye,  
 An' I sys 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an'  
 Sally says 'Noa, thou moant,'  
 But I g'ed 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
 an' Sally says 'doant'

## IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeatin', at  
 fust she wur all in a tew,  
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together  
 like birds on a beugh,

<sup>1</sup> Bellowed, cried out<sup>2</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits

An' Muggins 'e preach'd o' Hell-fire an'  
 the loov o' God fur men,  
 An' then upo' coomin' awaay Sally g'ed  
 me a kiss ov 'ersen.

## X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a lick like  
 Satan as fell  
 Down out o' heaven I' Hell-fire—thaw  
 theer's now drinkin' I' Hell,  
 Mea fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf  
 fro' the door,  
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
 as well as afoor

## XI.

Sa like a great num-cumpus I blubber'd  
 awaay o' the bed—  
 'Weant niver do it naw moor,' an'  
 Sally loookt up an' she said,  
 'I'll upowd it<sup>1</sup> tha weant, thou'rt like  
 the rest o' the men,  
 Thou'll goa sniffin' about the tap till tha  
 does it agean  
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knows,  
 as knaws tha sa well,  
 That, if tha sees 'im an' smells 'im tha'll  
 foller 'im sick into Hell'

## XII

'Naay,' says I, 'fur I weant goa sniffin'  
 about the tap'  
 'Weant tha?' she says, an' mysen I  
 thowt I' mysen 'mayhap'  
 'Noa' an' I started awaay like a shot,  
 an' down to the Hinn,  
 An' I browt what tha sees stannin' theer,  
 yon big black bottle o' gin

## XIII

'That caps owt,'<sup>2</sup> says Sally, an' saw she  
 begins to cry,  
 But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to  
 'er, 'Sally,' says I,  
 'Stan' 'im theer I' the naame o' the Lord  
 an' the power ov 'is Graace,  
 Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll loook my hennemy  
 strait I' the faace,

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.<sup>2</sup> That's beyond everything





## I THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE 11871.

I

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard  
Grenville lay,  
And a pirance, like a sister d bird, come  
flying from far away.  
'Spanish ships of war at sea' we have  
sighted fifty-three.'  
Then swore Lord Thomas Howard  
'Fore God I am no coward,  
But I cannot meet them here, for my  
ships are out of gear,  
And the half my men are sick. I must  
fly, but follow quick!  
We are six ships of the line, can we  
fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville 'I  
know you are no coward,  
You fly them for a moment to fight with  
them again  
But I've ninety men and more that are  
lying sick ashore.  
I should count myself the coward if I left  
them, my Lord Howard,  
To these Inquisition dogs and the devil  
doms of Spain.'

III

So Lord Howard part away with five  
ships of war that day,  
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent  
summer heaven,  
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick  
men from the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And we laid them on the ballast down  
below;  
For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pun, that they  
were not left to Spain,  
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the  
glory of the Lord

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work  
the ship and to fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till the  
Spaniard came in sight,  
With his huge sea castles heaving upon  
the weather bow  
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
I or to fight is but to die!  
There'll be little of us left by the time  
this sun be set.'  
And Sir Richard said again 'We be all  
good English men  
Let us bring these dogs of Seville, the  
children of the devil,  
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or  
devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
we roar'd a hurrah, and so  
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the  
heart of the foe,  
With her hundred fighters on deck, and  
her ninety sick below,  
For half of their fleet to the right and  
half to the left were seen,  
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the  
long sea lane between

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down  
from their decks and laugh'd,  
Thousands of their seamen made mock at  
the mad little craft  
Running on and on, till delay'd  
By their mountain-like San Philip that,  
of fifteen hundred tons,  
And up-shadowing high above us with  
her yawning tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and we  
stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung  
above us like a cloud  
Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,

Four galleons drev away  
From the Spanish fleet that dy,  
And two upon the larboard and two upon  
the starboard l'y,  
And the battle thunder broke from them  
all

## VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she be  
thought herself and went  
Having that within her womb that had  
left her ill content,  
And the rest they came aboard us, and  
they fought us hard to hand,  
I or a dozen times they came with their  
pikes and musqueteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a  
dog that shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the land

## IX

And the sun went down, and the stars  
came out far over the summer sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight of  
the one and the fifty three  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
their high built galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
with her battle-thunder and flame,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drev  
back with her dead and her shame.  
For some were sunk and many were shat-  
ter'd, and so could fight us no  
more—

God of battles, was ever a battle like this  
in the world before?

## X

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck,  
And it chanced that, when half of the  
short summer night was gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he had  
left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was dressing  
it suddenly dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in the  
side and the head,  
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

## XI

And the night went down, and the sun  
smiled out far over the summer sea,  
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides  
lay round us all in a ring,  
But they dared not touch us again, for  
they fear'd that we still could sting,  
So they watch'd what the end would be.  
And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
slain,  
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
In the crash of the cannonades and the  
desperate strife,  
And the sick men down in the hold were  
most of them stark and cold,  
And the pikes were all broken or bent,  
and the powder was all of it spent;  
And the masts and the rigging were lying  
over the side;  
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,  
'We have fought such a fight for a day  
and a night  
As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a cry less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die—does it matter when?  
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink  
her, split her in twain!  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the  
hands of Spain!'

## XII

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the  
seamen made reply  
'We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives  
We will make the Spaniard promise, if  
we yield, to let us go;  
We shall live to fight again and to strike  
another blow'  
And the lion there lay dying, and they  
yielded to the foe.

## XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their  
flagship bore him then,

Where they laid him by the mast, old  
 Sir Richard caught at last,  
 And they praised him to his face with  
 their courtly foreign grace,  
 But he rose upon their decks, and he cried  
 'I have fought for Queen and Faith like  
 a valiant man and true,  
 I have only done my duty as a man is  
 bound to do.  
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Gren-  
 ville die !'  
 And he fell upon their decks, and he died

## XIV

And they stared at the dead that had  
 been so valiant and true,  
 And had holden the power and glory of  
 Spain so cheap  
 That he dared her with one little ship  
 and his English few,  
 Was he devil or man? He was devil  
 for aught they knew,  
 But they sank his body with honour down  
 into the deep,  
 And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
 swarthier alien crew,  
 And away she sail'd with her loss and  
 long'd for her own;  
 When a wind from the lands they had  
 run'd awoke from sleep,  
 And the water began to heave and the  
 weather to moan,  
 And or ever that evening ended a great  
 gale blew,  
 And a wave like the wave that is raised  
 by an earthquake grew,  
 Till it smote on their hulls and their sails  
 and their masts and their flags,  
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
 the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,  
 And the little Revenge herself went down  
 by the island crags  
 To be lost evermore in the main

## THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by  
 their clash,  
 And prelude on the keys, I know the  
 song,

Their favourite—which I call 'The Tables  
 Turned'  
 Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air'

## EVELYN

O diviner Air,  
 Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the  
 glare,  
 Far from out the west in shadowing  
 showers,  
 Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
 Making fresh and fair  
 All the bowers and the flowers,  
 Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
 Over all this weary world of ours,  
 Breathe, diviner Air !

A sweet voice that—you scarce could  
 better that  
 Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn

## EDITH

O diviner light,  
 Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with  
 night,  
 Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
 showers,  
 Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
 Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
 Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
 Over all this run'd world of ours,  
 Break, diviner light !

Marvellously like, their voices—and them  
 selves !

Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
 other,

As one is somewhat graver than the other—  
 Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,  
 whom

You count the father of your fortune,  
 longs

For this alliance let me ask you then,  
 Which voice most takes you? for I do  
 not doubt

Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
 With one or other tho' sometimes I  
 fear

You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
 doubt

Between the two—which must not be—  
which might

Be death to one they both are beautiful  
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
The common voice, if one may trust it  
she?

No! but the paler and the graver, Edith  
Woo her and gain her then no waver-  
ing, boy!

The graver is perhaps the one for you  
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well  
For love will go by contrast, as by likes

No sisters ever prized each other more  
Not so their mother and her sister loved  
More passionately still

But that my best  
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,  
And that I know you worthy every way  
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath  
To part them, or part from them and  
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands in  
your view

From this bry window—which our house  
has held

Three hundred years—will pass collater-  
ally

My father with a child on either knee,  
A hand upon the head of either child,  
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his  
own

Were silver, 'get them wedded' would  
he say

And once my prattling Edith ask'd him  
'why?'

Ay, why? said he, 'for why should I go  
lame?'

Then told them of his wars, and of his  
wound

For see—this wine—the grape from  
whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,  
When that brave soldier, down the terrible  
ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet He left  
me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its youth,  
As I of mine, and my first passion.  
Come!

Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name. no  
fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-  
time

By change of feather for all that, my  
boy,

Some birds are sick and sullen when they  
moult.

An old and worthy name! but mine that  
sturd

Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.  
Once more—a happier marriage than my  
own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
plain.

The highway running by it leaves a breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where, long  
ago,

One bright May morning in a world of  
song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The aerial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed, I woke An open linden-  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me,  
show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face on  
earth

The face of one there sitting opposite,  
On whom I brought a strange unhappi-  
ness,

That time I did not see

Love at first sight  
May seem—with goodly rhyme and  
reason for it—

Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face  
Gone in a moment—strange Yet once,  
when first

I came on lake Llanberis in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm—one light-  
ning-fork

Flash'd out the lake ; and tho' I loiter'd  
there

The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquer all the day

The Sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me

Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well  
For look you here—the shadows are too  
deep.

And like the critic's blurring comment  
make

The various beauties of the work appear  
The darkest faults the sweet eyes frown  
the lips

Seem but a gush My sole memorial  
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
sense and soul

And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found  
Long after as it seem'd, beneath the tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechen boughs

Of our New Forest I was there alone  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by when one quick  
perl

Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmer-  
ing glaces

Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
happiness,

And moved to merriment at a passing jest

There one of those about her knowing  
me

Call'd me to join them, so with these I  
spent

What seem'd my crowning hour, my day  
of days

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,  
The worse for her, for me ' was I content ?  
Ay—no, not quite, for now and then I  
thought

Laziness, vague love longings, the bright  
May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal  
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with  
Plato's God,

Not findable here—content, and not con-  
tent,

In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his friend  
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says  
' Good ' very like ' not altogether he '

As yet I had not bound myself by  
words,

Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
Edith love me Then came the day  
when I,

Flattering myself that all my doubts were  
fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts of  
all—

Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—  
I had braced my purpose to declare my  
self

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise  
The golden gates would open at a word  
I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen  
And lost and found again, had got so far,  
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell—I  
heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
doors—

On a sudden after two Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health again,  
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—  
there,

There was the face, and altogether she  
The mother fell about the daughter's  
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,  
Their people throng'd about them from  
the hall,

And in the thick of question and reply  
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,  
And all the Furies

I was bound to her,  
I could not free myself in honour—bound  
Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counterpressures of the yielded hand  
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,

Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her  
 eyes  
 Upon me when she thought I did not  
 see—  
 Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but  
 could I wed her  
 Loving the other? do her that great  
 wrong?  
 Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
 morn?  
 Had I not known where Love, at first a  
 fear,  
 Grew after marriage to full height and  
 form?  
 Yet after marriage, that mock-sister  
 there—  
 Brother in law—the fiery nearness of it—  
 Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—  
 What end but darkness could ensue from  
 this  
 For all the three? So Love and Honour  
 join'd  
 Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise  
 the full  
 High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up  
 and down  
 Advancing nor retreating

Edith wrote

'My mother bids me ask' (I did not tell  
 you—  
 A widow with less guile than many a child  
 God help the wrinkled children that are  
 Christ's  
 As well as the plump cheek—she wrought  
 us harm,  
 Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?'  
 (so ran  
 The letter) 'you have not been here of  
 late.  
 You will not find me here. At last I go  
 On that long-promised visit to the North  
 I told your wayside story to my mother  
 And Evelyn. She remembers you  
 Farewell  
 Pray come and see my mother Almost  
 blind  
 With ever growing cataract, yet she thinks  
 She sees you when she hears Again  
 farewell'

Cold words from one I had hoped to  
 warm so far  
 That I could stamp my image on her  
 heart!  
 'Pray come and see my mother, and  
 farewell'  
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of  
 heaven  
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
 strange!  
 What dwarfs are men! my stranglea  
 vinity  
 Utter'd a stifled cry—to have next myself  
 And all in vain for her—cold heart or  
 none—  
 No bride for me Yet so my path was  
 clear  
 To win the sister

Whom I woo'd and won

For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,  
 Because the simple mother work'd upon  
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on the  
 day

But on that day, not being all at ease,  
 I from the altar glancing back upon her,  
 Before the first 'I will' was utter'd, saw  
 The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passion-  
 less—

'No harm, no harm I turn'd again, and  
 placed  
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no  
 word,  
 She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn  
 clung  
 In utter silence for so long, I thought  
 'What, will she never set her sister free?'

We left her, happy each in each, and  
 then,  
 As tho' the happiness of each in each  
 Were not enough, must fain have torrents,  
 lakes,  
 Hills, the great things of Nature and the  
 fair,  
 To lift us as it were from commonplace,  
 And help us to our joy Better have  
 sent

Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
To change with her horizon, if true Love  
Were not his own imperial all-in all

Far off we went My God, I would  
not live  
Save that I think this gross hard seeming  
world

Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs  
our gains

For on the dark night of our marriage  
day  
The great Tragedian, that had quenched  
herself

In that assumption of the bridesmaid—  
she

That loved me—our true Edith—her  
brain broke

With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain  
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray  
Before that altar—so I think, and there  
They found her beating the hard Protest-  
ant doors

She died and she was buried ere we  
knew

I learnt it first I had to speak At  
once

The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that  
had sunn'd

The morning of our marriage, past away  
And on our home return the duly want  
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
Haunted us like her ghost, and by and  
by,

Either from that necessity for talk  
Which lives with blindness, or plain  
innocence

Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
Should earn from both the pruse of  
heroism,

The mother broke her promise to the  
dead,

And told the living daughter with what  
love

Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of  
her,

And all her sweet self sacrifice and death

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt  
the twins—

Did I not tell you they were twins?—  
prevail'd

So far that no caress could win my wife  
Back to that passionate answer of full  
heart

I had from her at first Not that her love,  
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of  
love,

Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous  
wail

For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be  
my bride,

Put forth cold hands between us, and I  
fear'd

The very fountains of her life were  
chill'd,

So took her thence, and brought her  
here, and here

She bore a child, whom reverently we  
call'd

Edith, and in the second year was born  
A second—thus I named from her own  
self,

Evelyn, then two weeks—no more—she  
joined,

In and beyond the grave, that one she  
loved

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the  
day,

The sisters glide about me hand in hand,  
Both beautiful alike nor can I tell  
One from the other, no, nor care to tell

One from the other, only know they  
come,

They smile upon me, till, remembering  
all

The love they both have borne me, and  
the love

I bore them both—divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the grave—  
I know not which of these I love the  
best

But *you* love Edith, and her own true  
eyes

Are traitors to her, our quick Evelyn—



The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they  
 talk,  
 And not without good reason, my good  
 son—  
 Is yet untouch'd and I that hold them  
 both  
 Dearest of all things—well, I am not  
 sure—  
 But if there be a preference either way,  
 And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
 'Most dearest' be a true superlative—  
 I think I likewise love your Edith most

## THE VILLAGE WIFE, OR, THE ENTAIL<sup>1</sup>

I

'OUSE KFFFR sent thr my lass, fur New  
 Squire coom'd last night  
 Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll gor wi'  
 tha brack all right,  
 Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-  
 rants the heggs be as well,  
 Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
 breaks the shell

II

Sit thyssen down fur a bit hev a glass o'  
 cowslip wine!  
 I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as  
 thrw they was gells o' mine,  
 Fur then we was all es one, the Squire  
 an' 'is darters an' me,  
 Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver  
 not took to she  
 But Nelly, the last of the cletch,<sup>2</sup> I liked  
 'er the fust on 'em all,  
 Fur hoffsens we talkt o' my darter es died  
 o' the fever at fall  
 An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but  
 Miss Annie she said it wur draams,  
 Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er an'  
 arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paruns  
 Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my chulder,  
 I han't gotten none!  
 Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taail in 'is  
 'and, an' owd Squire's gone

<sup>1</sup> See note to 'Northern Cobbler'

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

III

Fur 'staate be i' taail, my lass tha doon  
 know whar that be?  
 But I knows the law, I does, for the  
 lawyer ha tow'd it me  
 'When theer's naw 'eud to a 'Ouse by  
 the faill o' that ere mairle—  
 The gells they counts fur nowt, and the  
 next un he takes the taail'

IV

Whar be the next un like? can tha tell  
 ony harm on 'ur lass?  
 Nary sit down—naw 'urry—er coud '—  
 hev another glass!  
 Stringe an' coud fur the time! we may  
 happen a fall o' snaw—  
 Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but  
 I likes to know  
 An' I 'oaps es 'e beant boooklarin'd but  
 'e doon't not coom fro' the 'here,  
 We'd new o' thut wi' the Squire, an' we  
 haates boooklarin' ere

V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholar'd, an  
 niver lookt arter the land—  
 Whoats or tonups or tantes—'e 'ed hallus  
 a boook i' is and,  
 Hallus alorn wi' is boooks, thaw nigh  
 upo' seventy year  
 An' boooks, what's boooks? thou knowe  
 thebbe naither 'ere nor theer

VI

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taails, an  
 the lawyer he tow'd it me  
 Thut 'is taail were sor tied up es he  
 couldn't cut down a tree!  
 'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I  
 haates 'em, my lass,  
 Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'  
 they sucks the muck fro' the grass.

VII

An' Squire wur hallus a smilin', an' gried  
 to the tramps goin' by—  
 An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi'  
 hoffsens a drop in 'is eye

An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn  
ridin erse to 'ersen,  
An they rampaged about w' their grooms,  
an' was artin' arter the men,  
An' hullus a dallack<sup>1</sup> an' dizen d o't,  
an' a-bavin' new clothes,  
While 'e sit lil e a great glimmer gowt:  
w' 'is glasses athurt is now-e,  
An' 'is noase sa grufed w' snuff es it  
couldn't be scroob'd aw'ay  
Fur 'etween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e snufft  
up a box in a day,  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds w' 'is gin,  
An' 'e niver not sho' ore 'ere, but 'e  
leaved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but  
Charlie 'e catch'd the pike,  
For 'e warn't no. burn to the land, an' 'e  
didn't take kind to it like,  
But I ears es ed gie fur a howr<sup>2</sup> owd  
book thutty pourd an' moor,  
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen,  
sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor,  
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow  
much—fur an owd scratted storn,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an'  
'e got a brown pot an' a born,  
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goa,  
w' good gowd o' the Queen,  
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-narkt an'  
which was a shaame to be seen  
But 'e niver loookt over a bill, nor 'e  
niver not seed to owt,  
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but boooks, an'  
boooks, as thou knaws, beant nowt

## VIII

But owd Squire's laady es long es she  
lived she kep 'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed  
none of 'er darters 'ere,  
But arter she died we was all es one, the  
childer an' me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens  
we hed 'em to ter  
Lawk! 'ow I hugh'd when the lasses 'ud  
talk o' their Missis's waays,

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colours<sup>2</sup> Owl<sup>3</sup> Futhy

An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses—I'll  
tell th' some o' these daays  
Hoanly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop,  
like 'er mother a'oor—  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver  
derken'd my door

## IX

An Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd  
gotten a fright at last,  
An 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they foller'd sa fast,  
But Squire wur as fear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e  
says to 'im, meek as a mouse,  
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taail, or the  
gells 'ull goa to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oaps  
es thou'll 'elp me a bit,  
An if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taail I  
may saave mysen yit'

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
swears, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa  
I've gotten the 'staate by the taail an'  
be dang'd if I iver let goa'  
Coom! coom! feyther,' 'e says, 'why  
shouldn't thy boooks be sowd?  
I hears es soom o' thy boooks mebbe  
worth their weight i' gowd'

## XI

Heaps an' heaps o' boooks, I ha' see'd  
'em, belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teard out leaves i' the  
middle to kindle the fire,  
Sa moast on 'is owd big boooks fetch'd  
nigh to nowt at the saale,  
And Squire were at Charlie agean to g't  
'im to cut off 'is taail.

## XII

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were  
that outdacious o' oam,  
Not thaw ya went fur to make out Hell  
w' a small-tooth coamb—  
Droonk w' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk  
w' the farmer's aale,  
Mad w' the lasses an' all—an' 'e wouldn't  
cut off the taail

## XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck, and a  
 thurn be a-growin' theer,  
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maay  
 es I see'd it to-year—  
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied  
 me a scare tother night,  
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoast i'  
 the derk, fur it loookt sa white  
 'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp i'—thaw  
 the banks o' the beck be sa high,  
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw  
 niver a hair wur awry,  
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taail, fur 'e  
 lost 'is taail i' the beck.

## XIV

Sa 'is taail wur lost an 'is boooks wur  
 gone an' 'is boy wur dead,  
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e  
 niver not lift oop 'is 'ead  
 Hallus a soft un Squire' an' 'e smiled,  
 fur 'e hedn't naw friend,  
 Sa feyther an' son was buried togher,  
 an' this wur the hend

## XV

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the  
 mooney, but hes the pride,  
 'E reads of a sewer an' sartin 'oap o' the  
 tother side,  
 But I beant that sewer es the Lord, how-  
 siver they praay'd an' praay'd,  
 Lets them inter 'eaven easy es leaves their  
 debts to be paaid  
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor  
 owd Squire i' the wood,  
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they  
 weant niver coom to naw good.

## XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaay  
 wi' a hoffer lad,  
 An' nawbody 'eard on 'er sin, sa o' coorse  
 she be gone to the bad!  
 An' Lucy wur laame o' one leg, sweet  
 'arts she niver 'ed none—

Straange an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy ' we  
 naamed her ' Dot an' gaw one '  
 An' Hetty wur weak i' the battics, wi out  
 ony harm i' the legs,  
 An' the fever 'ed baaked Jinny's 'ead as  
 bald as one o' them heggs,  
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craadle as big  
 i' the mouth as a cow,  
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>2</sup> lass, or  
 she weant git a maate onyhow!  
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afor  
 my awn foalks to my faace  
 ' A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to  
 be larn'd her awn plaace,  
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now  
 be a-growin' sa howd,  
 I knows that mooch o' shea, es it beant  
 not fit to be tow'd!

## XVII

Sa I didn't not take it kindly ov owd  
 Miss Annie to saay  
 Es I should be talkin agean 'em, es soon  
 es they went awaay,  
 Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went,  
 an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,  
 Fur I'd ha done ow't for the Squire an' 'is  
 gells es belong'd to the land,  
 Boooks, es I said afor, thebbe neyther  
 'ere nor theer!  
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur  
 huppuds o' twenty year

## XVIII

An' they hallus paaid what I hax'd, sa I  
 hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
 An' they know'd what butter wur, an' they  
 know'd what a hegg wur an' all,  
 Hugger-mugger they lived, but they  
 wasn't that easy to please,  
 Till I gied 'em Hinjan curn, an' they  
 laaid big heggs es tha seesas,  
 An' I niver puts saame<sup>3</sup> i' my butter,  
 they does it at Willis's farm,  
 Taaste another drop o' the wine—tweant  
 do tha naw harm

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward

- Emigrate

<sup>3</sup> Lard

## XIX

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' his trail in 'is  
 'and, an' owd Squire's gone,  
 I heerd 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my  
 nightcap wur on;  
 Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yet, fur he  
 coom'd last night so late—  
 Pluksh! 'is the hens i' the pens' why  
 didn't thr hesp the grate?

IN THE CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL

## EMMIE.

## I

Our doctor had call'd in another, I never  
 had seen him before,  
 But he sent a chill to my heart when I  
 saw him come in at the door,  
 Fresh from the surgery-schools of France  
 and of other lands—  
 Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big  
 merciless hands!  
 Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but  
 they said too of him  
 He was happier using the knife than in  
 trying to save the limb,  
 And that I can well believe, for he look'd  
 so coarse and so red,  
 I could think he was one of those who  
 would break their jests on the dead,  
 And mangle the living dog that had loved  
 him and fawn'd at his knee—  
 Drench'd with the hellish ooral— that  
 ever such things should be!

## II

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of  
 our children would die  
 But for the voice of Love, and the smile,  
 and the comforting eye—  
 Here was a boy in the ward, every bone  
 seem'd out of its place—  
 Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all  
 but a hopeless case

<sup>1</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to  
 scare trespassing fowl

And he handled him gently enough, but  
 his voice and his face were not kind,  
 And it was but a hopeless case, he had  
 seen it and made up his mind,  
 And he said to me roughly 'The lad will  
 need little more of your care'  
 'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek  
 the Lord Jesus in prayer,  
 They are all his children here, and I pray  
 for them all as my own'  
 But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman,  
 can prayer set a broken bone?'  
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I  
 know that I heard him say  
 'All very well—but the good Lord Jesus  
 has had his day'

## III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd  
 It will come by and by  
 O how could I serve in the wards if the  
 hope of the world were a lie?  
 How could I bear with the sights and the  
 loathsome smells of disease  
 But that He said 'Ye do it to me, when  
 ye do it to these?'

## IV

So he went And we past to this ward  
 where the younger children are laid  
 Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-  
 ling, our meek little maid,  
 Empty you see just now! We have lost  
 her who loved her so much—  
 Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive  
 plant to the touch,  
 Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
 moved me to tears,  
 Hers was the gratefullest heart I have  
 found in a chld of her years—  
 Nay you remember our Emmie, you used  
 to send her the flowers,  
 How she would smile at 'em, play with  
 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!  
 They that can wander at will where the  
 works of the Lord are reveal'd  
 Little guess what joy can be got from a  
 cowslip out of the field,  
 Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all  
 they can know of the spring,

They freshen and sweeten the wards like  
the wift of an Angel's wing,  
And she lay with a flower in one hand and  
her thin hands crost on her breast—  
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire,  
and we thought her at rest,  
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor  
said 'Poor little dear,  
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow, she'll  
never live thro' it, I fear'

## V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
far as the head of the stair,  
Then I return'd to the ward, the child  
didn't see I was there

## VI

Never since I was nurse, had I been so  
grieved and so vexed!  
Emmie had heard him Softly she call'd  
from her cot to the next,  
'He says I shall never live thro' it, O  
Annie, what shall I do?'  
Annie consider'd 'If I,' said the wise  
little Annie, 'was you,  
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
It's all in the picture there "Little  
children should come to me"'  
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I  
find that it always can please  
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with  
children about his knees)  
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then  
if I call to the Lord,  
How should he know that it's me? such  
a lot of beds in the ward!'  
That was a puzzle for Annie Again she  
consider'd and said  
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you  
leave 'em outside on the bed—  
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but,  
Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
It's the little girl with her arms lying out  
on the counterpane'

## VII

I had sat three nights by the child—I  
could not watch her for four—

My brain had begun to reel—I felt I  
could do it no more  
That was my sleeping night, but I thought  
that it never would pass.  
There was a thunderclap once, and a  
clatter of hurl on the glass,  
And there was a phantom cry that I heard  
as I tost about,  
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
storm and the darkness without,  
My sleep was broken besides with dreams  
of the dreadful knife  
And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
scarce would escape with her life,  
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd  
she stood by me and smiled,  
And the doctor came at his hour, and we  
went to see to the child

## VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools we  
believed her asleep again—  
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out  
on the counterpane,  
Say that His day is done! Ah why should  
we care what they say?  
The Lord of the children had heard her,  
and Emmie had past away

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE  
PRINCESS ALICE

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,  
which lived  
True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss,  
Born of true life and love, divorce thee  
not  
From earthly love and life—if what we call  
The spirit flash not all at once from out  
Thiss shadow into Substance—then perhaps  
The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
praise  
From thine own State, and all our  
breadth of realm,  
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds  
in light,  
Ascends to thee, and this March morn  
that sees  
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom



Storm at the Water gate ' storm at the  
 Bailey-gate ' storm, and it ran  
 Surging and swaying all round us, as  
 ocean on every side  
 Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
 daily devour'd by the tide—  
 So many thousands that if they be bold  
 enough, who shall escape?  
 Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall  
 know we are soldiers and men!  
 Ready! take aim at their leaders—their  
 masses are gapp'd with our grape—  
 Backward they reel like the wave, like  
 the wave flinging forward again,  
 Flying and foild at the last by the hand-  
 ful they could not subdue,  
 And ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew

## IV

Handful of men as we were we were  
 English in heart and in limb,  
 Strong with the strength of the race to  
 command, to obey, to endure,  
 Each of us fought as if hope for the garri-  
 son hung but on him,  
 Still—could we watch at all points? we  
 were every day fewer and fewer  
 There was a whisper among us, but only  
 a whisper that past  
 'Children and wives—if the tigers leap  
 into the fold unawares—  
 Every man die at his post—and the foe  
 may outlive us at last—  
 Better to fall by the hands that they love,  
 than to fall into theirs!'  
 Roar upon roar in a moment two mines  
 by the enemy sprung  
 Clove into perilous chasms our walls and  
 our poor palisades  
 Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure  
 that your hand be as true!  
 Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
 are your flank fusillades—  
 Twice do we hurl them to earth from the  
 ladders to which they had clung,  
 Twice from the ditch where they shelter  
 we drive them with hand-grenades,  
 And ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew

## V

Then on another wild morning another  
 wild earthquake out-tore  
 Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
 twelve good paces or more  
 Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there  
 from the light of the sun—  
 One has leapt up on the breach, crying  
 out 'Follow me, follow me!'  
 Mark him—he falls! then another, and  
 him too, and down goes he.  
 Had they been bold enough then, who  
 can tell but the traitors had won?  
 Boardings and rafters and doors—an em-  
 brasure! make way for the gun!  
 Now double charge it with grape! It is  
 charged and we fire, and they  
 run  
 Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the  
 dark face have his due!  
 Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
 fought with us, faithful and few,  
 Fought with the bravest among us, and  
 drove them, and smote them, and  
 slew,  
 That ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner in India blew

## VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not  
 what we do We can fight!  
 But to be soldier all day and be sentinel  
 all thro' the night—  
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,  
 their lying alarms,  
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
 shoutings and soundings to arms,  
 Ever the labour of fifty that had to be  
 done by five,  
 Ever the marvel among us that one should  
 be left alive,  
 Ever the day with its traitorous death  
 from the loopholes around,  
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse  
 to be laid in the ground,  
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge  
 of cataract skies,  
 Stench of old ossal decaying, and infinite  
 torment of flies,

Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing  
 over an English field,  
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound  
 that never not be heal'd  
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful  
 pitiless knife,—  
 Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never  
 could save us a life  
 Valour of delicate women who tended the  
 hospital bed,  
 Horror of women in travail among the  
 dying and dead,  
 Grief for our perishing children, and  
 never a moment for grief,  
 Toil and ineffable weariness faltering  
 hopes of relief,  
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd  
 for all that we knew—  
 Then day and night, day and night, coming  
 down on the still shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands  
 of cannon balls—  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew

111

Hark cannonade, fusillade 'is it true what  
 was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way  
 through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing  
 again in our ears!  
 Ah on a sudden the garrison utter a jub-  
 ilant shout  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer  
 with conquering cheers,  
 Such from the hospital echo them, women  
 and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of  
 Havelock's good fusileers  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the  
 Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch—'saved' we are  
 saved—is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved  
 by the blessing of Heaven!  
 'Hold it for fifteen days' we have held  
 it for eighty-seven!  
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old  
 banner of England blew

# SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

(IN WALES)

My friend should meet me somewhere  
 hereabout  
 To take me to that hiding in the hills  
 I have broke their cage, no gilded ore,  
 I trow—  
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone,  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or  
 none,  
 For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churn-  
 ing chasms—  
 And God's free air, and hope of better  
 things.

I would I knew their speech, not now  
 to glean,  
 Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd  
 ears,  
 Some ears for Christ in this wild field of  
 Wales—  
 But, bread, merely for bread This  
 tongue that wagged  
 They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel—  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it—is  
 here  
 But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;  
 'Bara'—what use? The Shepherd,  
 when I speak,  
 Vaunting a sudden eyelid with his hard  
 'Dim Snesneg' passes, wroth at things  
 of old—  
 No fault of mine Had he God's word  
 in Welsh  
 He might be kinder happily come the  
 day!  
 Not least art thou, thou little Bethle-  
 hem  
 In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;  
 Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
 Least, for in thee the word was born again.



Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever living  
 word,  
 Who whilome spakest to the South in  
 Greek  
 About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
 And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
 As good need was—thou hast come to  
 talk our isle  
 Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
 Must learn to use the tongues of all the  
 world  
 Yet art thou thine own witness that thou  
 bringest  
 Not peace, a sword, a fire  
 What did he say,  
 My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I  
 crost  
 In flying hither? that one night a crowd  
 Throng'd the waste field about the city  
 gates  
 The king was on them suddenly with a  
 host  
 Why there? they came to hear their  
 preacher Then  
 Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
 Lord Cobham,  
 Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor  
 voice  
 Nor finger raised against him—took and  
 hang'd,  
 Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—  
 thirty nine—  
 Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends,  
 as rebels  
 And burn'd alive as heretics! for your  
 Priest  
 Labels—to take the king along with  
 him—  
 All heresy, treason but to call men  
 traitors  
 May make men traitors  
 Rose of Lancaster,  
 Red in thy birth, redder with household  
 war,  
 Now reddest with the blood of holy men,  
 Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—  
 If somewhere in the North, as Rumour  
 sang  
 Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lust-  
 ing line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,<sup>1</sup>  
 That were my rose, there my allegiance  
 due.  
 Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd  
 doubtless dead  
 So to this king I cleaved my friend was  
 he,  
 Once my fast friend I would have given  
 my life  
 To help his own from scathe, a thousand  
 lives  
 To save his soul He might have come  
 to learn  
 Our Wiclif's learning but the worldly  
 Priests  
 Who fear the king's hard common-sense  
 should find  
 What rotten piles uphold their mason  
 work,  
 Urge him to foreign war O had he  
 will'd  
 I might have stricken a lusty stroke for  
 him,  
 But he would not, far liefer led my  
 friend  
 Back to the pure and universal church,  
 But he would not whether that heirless  
 flaw  
 In his throne's title make him feel so  
 frail,  
 He learns on Antichrist, or that his mind,  
 So quick, so capable in soldiership,  
 In matters of the faith, ails the while!  
 More worth than all the kingdoms of  
 this world,  
 Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest  
 Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my  
 dear friend!  
 Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!  
 Lord give thou power to thy two wit-  
 nesses!  
 Lest the false faith make merry over  
 them!  
 Two—nay but thirty nine have risen and  
 stand,  
 Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,  
 Before thy light, and cry continually—  
 Cry—against whom?

<sup>1</sup> Richard II

Him who should bear the sword  
Of justice—what! the kindly boy  
Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him  
Who gibed and japed—in many a merry  
tale

That shoo! our sides—at Pardoners,  
Summoners,

Friers, absolution sellers, monkenes  
And nunneries, when the wild hour and  
the wine

Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,  
Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink  
Thy fleurs de lys in slime again, and fling  
Thy royalty back into the motous fits  
Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and  
mine,

Thy comrade—than to persecute the  
Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred  
Arundel

Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the  
flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his  
clerks

Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,  
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten  
Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of  
them—

Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted  
To bandit, thief, assassin—ye! to him  
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied  
to him,

Who finds the Saviour in his mother  
tongue

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung  
down to swine—

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who  
will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar  
Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,  
meant

To course and range thro' all the world,  
should be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the  
Church—

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart,  
and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how  
long,

O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here  
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a  
Cross!

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor  
knees

Rather to thee, green boscaje, work of  
God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfar-  
ing tree!

Rather to thee thou living water, drawn  
By this good Wichf mountain down from  
heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native  
tongue—

No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and  
drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me  
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine  
arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and  
blood

And holier That was heresy (My good  
friend

By this time should be with me!  
'Images?'

'Bury them as God's truer images  
Are daily buried' 'Heresy—Penance?'

'Fast,  
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a man  
repent,

Do penance in his heart, God hears him!  
'Heresy—

Not shriven, not saved?' 'What profits  
an ill Priest

Between me and my God? I would not  
spurn

Good counsel of good friends, but shrive  
myself

No, not to an Apostle! 'Heresy'  
(My friend is long in coming) 'Pil-  
grimages?'

'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-  
 dances, vice  
 The poor man's money gone to fat the  
 friar  
 Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?'  
 —'Heresy'—  
 (Hath he been here—not found me—gone  
 again?  
 Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?)  
 'Bread—  
 Bread left after the blessing?' how they  
 stared,  
 That was their main test-question—  
 glared at me!  
 'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He  
 veils  
 His flesh in bread, body and bread  
 together'  
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
 wolves,  
 'No bread, no bread God's body!'  
 Archbishop, Bishop,  
 Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers,  
 Parish clerks—  
 'No bread, no bread!'—'Authority of  
 the Church,  
 Power of the keys!'—Then I, God help  
 me, I  
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
 whole days—  
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
 And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since  
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth  
 Into the church, had only prov'n them-  
 selves  
 Poisoners, murderers Well—God par-  
 don all—  
 Me, them, and all the world—yea, that  
 proud Priest,  
 That mock meek mouth of utter Anti-  
 christ,  
 That traitor to King Richard and the  
 truth,  
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire  
 Amen!  
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life  
 Be by me in my death.  
 Those three! the fourth  
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt  
 were they

On *them* the smell of burning had not  
 past  
 That was a miracle to convert the king  
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
 What miracle could turn? *He* here  
 again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Him  
 self,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Himself,  
 And doom'd to burn alive  
 So, caught, I burn  
 Burn? heathen men have borne as much  
 as this,  
 For freedom, or the sake of those they  
 loved,  
 Or some less cause, some cause far less  
 than mine,  
 For every other cause is less than mine  
 The moth will singe her wings, and  
 singed return,  
 Her love of light quenching her fear of  
 pain—  
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
 fire?  
 Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd!  
 faint as I am,  
 God willing, I will burn for Him  
 Who comes?  
 A thousand marks are set upon my  
 head  
 Friend?—for perhaps—a tussle for it  
 then!  
 Nay, but my friend Thou art so well  
 disguised,  
 I knew thee not Hast thou brought  
 bread with thee?  
 I have not broken bread for fifty hours  
 None? I am damn'd already by the  
 Priest  
 For holding there was bread where bread  
 was none—  
 No bread. My friends await me yonder?  
 Yes  
 Lead on then *Up* the mountain? Is  
 it far?  
 Not far Climb first and reach me down  
 thy hand  
 I am not like to die for lack of bread  
 For I must live to testify by fire<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417

## COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord in your raised  
brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments  
We brought this iron from our isles of  
gold

Does the king know you deign to visit  
him  
Whom once he rose from off his throne  
to greet  
Before his people, like his brother king?  
I saw your face that morning in the crowd

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then  
So bearded Yes The city deck'd  
herself

To meet me, roar'd my name, the king,  
the queen

Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I  
spoke

The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace,  
be still!'

And when I ceased to speak, the king,  
the queen,

Sank from their thrones, and melted into  
tears,

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and  
voice

In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste

And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to  
heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean '  
chains

For him who gave a new heaven, a new  
earth,

As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the kings

Of Spain than all their battles ' chains  
for him

Who push'd his prow into the setting sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the

Dragon's mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the

World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise '

Chains ' we are Admirals of the Ocean,  
we,

We and our sons for ever Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
queen—

Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals  
we—

Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done—

The vast occasion of our stronger life—  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in  
your Spain,

Lost, showing courts and kings a truth  
the babe

Will suck in with his milk hereafter—  
earth

A sphere

Were *you* at Salamanca? No  
We fronted there the learning of all  
Spain,

All their cosmogonies, their astronomies  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the  
golden guess

Is morning-star to the full round of truth  
No guess-work ' I was certain of my goal,  
Some thought it heresy, but that would  
not hold

King David call'd the heavens a hide, a  
tent

Spread over earth, and so this earth was  
flat

Some cited old Lactantius could it be  
That trees grew downward, rain fell up-  
ward, men

Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and be  
sides,

The great Augustine wrote that none  
could breathe

Within the zone of heat, so might there  
be

Two Adams, two mankinds, and that  
was clean

Against God's word thus was I beaten  
back,

And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,  
And thought to turn my face from Spain

appeal

Once more to France or England, but  
our Queen  
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses  
Were half-assured this earth might be a  
sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
And Holy Church, from whom I never  
swerved

Not even by one hour's breadth of here-ye,  
I have accomplish'd what I came to do

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—  
I sail'd

On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights  
Of my first crew, their curses and their  
groins

The great flame-burner borne by Tene-  
riffe,

The compass, like an old friend false at last  
In our most need, appall'd them, and the  
wind

Still westward, and the wedy seas—at  
length

The landbird, and the branch with berries  
on it,

The carved staff—and last the light, the  
light

On Guanahan: but I changed the name,  
San Salvador I call'd it, and the light  
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad  
sky

Of dawning over—not those alien palms,  
The marvel of that fur new nature—not  
That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
East

Morrah with Jerusalem, and I saw  
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
Thro' all the homely town from jasper,  
sapphire,

Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
Jacinth, and amethyst—and those twelve  
gates,

Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death  
—I shall die—

I am written in the Lamb's own Book  
of Life

To walk within the glory of the Lord

Sunless and moonless, utter light—but  
no!

The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
dream to me

To mind me of the secret vow I made  
When Spain was waging war against  
the Moor—

I strove myself with Spain against the  
Moor

There came two voices from the Sepul-  
chre,

Two firms crying that if Spain should  
oust

The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce  
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and  
raze

The blessed tomb of Christ, whereon I  
vow'd

That, if our Princes harken'd to my  
prayer,

Whatever wealth I brought from that new  
world

Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead  
A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall

Gold? I had brought your Princes  
gold enough

If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been a  
Moor,

And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces to  
the Moor,

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester  
John,

And cast it to the Moor but *had* I  
brought

From Solomon's non-recover'd Ophir all  
The gold that Solomon's navies earned  
home,

Would that have gilded *me*! Blue blood  
of Spain,

Tho' quartering your own royal arms of  
Spain,

I have not blue blood and black blood  
of Spain,

The noble and the convict of Castile,  
How'd me from Hispaniola, for you  
know

The flies at home, that ever swarm about  
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur  
down

Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd  
me so

That even our prudent king, our righteous  
queen—

I pray'd them being so calumniated

They would commission one of weight  
and worth

To judge between my slander'd self and  
me—

Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—  
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed—  
who sick'd

My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
loosed

My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,  
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,  
gave

All but free leave for all to work the  
mines,

Drove me and my good brothers home in  
chains,

And gathering ruthless gold—a single  
piece

Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos  
—so

They tell me—weigh'd him down into the  
abysm—

The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,  
The seas of our discovering over-roll

Him and his gold, the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to the  
shore

There was a glimmering of God's hand

And God

Hath more than glimmer'd on me O  
my lord,

I swear to you I heard his voice between  
The thunders in the black Veragua  
nights,

'O soul of little faith, slow to believe'  
Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?

Given thee the keys of the great Ocean  
sea?

Set thee in nught till time shall be no  
more?

Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
world?

Endure 'thou hast done so well for men,  
that men

Cry out against thee was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?

And more than once in days  
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
drowning hope

Sank all but out of sight, I heard his  
voice,

'Be not cast down I lead thee by the  
hand,

Fear not' And I shall hear his voice  
again—

I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will—  
His voice again

Still for all that, my lord,  
I lying here bedridden and alone,  
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
king—

The first discoverer starves—his followers.  
all

Flower into fortune—our world's way—  
and I,

Without a roof that I can call mine own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
scum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,  
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain  
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—  
Then kindly native princes slain or slaved,  
Their wives and children Spanish concu-  
bines,

Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in  
blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the  
scourge,

Some over-labour'd, some by their own  
hands,—

Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,  
kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of  
Spain—

Ah God, the harmless people whom we  
 found  
 In Hispaniola's island Paradise!  
 Who took us for the very God's from  
 Heaven,  
 And we have sent them very fiends from  
 Hell,  
 And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
 Could sometimes wish I had never led  
 the way

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
 Queen  
 Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-  
 forted'  
 This credulous people will be brought to  
 Christ  
 And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who  
 bore the Cross  
 Thither, were excommunicated there  
 For curbing crimes that scandalised the  
 Cross,  
 By him, the Catholican Minorite,  
 Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe  
 These hard memorials of our truth to  
 Spain  
 Clung closer to us for a longer term  
 Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet  
 Pardon—too harsh, unjust I am rack'd  
 with pains

You see that I have hung them by my  
 bed,  
 And I will have them buried in my grave

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
 God's  
 Own voice to justify the dead—perchance  
 Spain once the most chivalric race on  
 earth,  
 Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm  
 on earth,  
 So made by me, may seek to unbury me,  
 To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,  
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain  
 Then some one standing by my grave  
 will say,  
 'Behold the bones of Christopher  
 Colon'—

'Ay, but the chains, what do they mean  
 —the chains? —  
 I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
 Who then will have to answer, 'These  
 same chains  
 Bound these same bones back thro' the  
 Atlantic sea,  
 Which he unchain'd for all the world to  
 come'

O Queen of Heaven who see'st the souls  
 in Hell  
 And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
 As they do—for the moment! Stay, my  
 son  
 Is here anon my son will speak for me  
 Abler than I ear in these spasms that  
 grince.  
 Pone against bone You will not One  
 last word

You move about the Court, I pray you  
 tell  
 King Ferdinand who plays with me, the  
 one,  
 Whose life has been no play with him  
 and his  
 Hualgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers,  
 fights,  
 Mutinies, treacheries—win'd it, and  
 congealed—  
 That I am loyal to him till the death,  
 And ready—the our Holy Catholic  
 Queen,  
 Who fain had pledged her jewels on my  
 first voyage,  
 Whose hope was mine to spread the  
 Catholic faith,  
 Who wept with me when I return'd in  
 chains,  
 Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,  
 To whom I send my prayer by night and  
 day—  
 She is gone—but you will tell the King,  
 that I,  
 Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd  
 with pains  
 Gain'd in the service of His Highness,  
 yet  
 Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage

And readier, if the King would hear, to  
lead  
One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall

Going? I am old and slighted. you  
have dared  
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor  
thanks!  
I am but an alien and a Genovese

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND  
A.D. 700)

## I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had  
stricken my father dead—  
But I gather'd my fellows together, I  
swore I would strike off his head  
Each of them look'd like a king, and was  
noble in birth as in worth,  
And each of them boasted he sprang from  
the oldest race upon earth  
Each was as brave in the fight as the  
bravest hero of song,  
And each of them liefer had died than  
have done one another a wrong  
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we  
sail'd on a Friday morn—  
He that had slain my father the day  
before I was born

## II

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
and there on the shore was he  
But a sudden blast blew us out and away  
thro' a boundless sea.

## III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we  
never had touch'd at before,  
Where a silent ocean always broke on a  
silent shore,  
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long  
waterfalls

Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base  
of the mountain walls,  
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by  
storm flourish'd up beyond sight,  
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to  
an unbelievable height,  
And high in the heaven above it there  
flicker'd a songless lark,  
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull  
couldn't low, and the dog couldn't  
bark

And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
never a murmur, a breath—  
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it  
quiet as death,  
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for  
whenever we strove to speak  
Our voices were thinner and fainter than  
any fluttermouse-shriek,  
And the men that were mighty of tongue  
and could raise such a battle cry  
That a hundred who heard it would rush  
on a thousand lances and die—  
O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so  
fluster'd with anger were they  
They almost fell on each other, but after  
we sail'd away

## IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we  
landed, a score of wild birds  
Cried from the topmost summit with  
human voices and words,  
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever  
their voices peal'd  
The steer fell down at the plow and the  
harvest died from the field,  
And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
and half of the cattle went lame,  
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and  
the dwelling broke into flame,  
And the shouting of these wild birds ran  
into the hearts of my crew,  
Till they shouted along with the shout  
ing and seized one another and  
slew.  
But I drew them the one from the other,  
I saw that we could not stay,  
And we left the dead to the birds and we  
sail'd with our wounded away



v

And we came to the Isle of Flowers,  
 their breath met us out on the sets,  
 For the Spring and the middle Summer  
 sat each on the lap of the breeze,  
 And the red passion flower to the cliffs,  
 and the dark blue clematis, clung,  
 And sturd with a myriad blossom the  
 long convolvulus hung,  
 And the topmost spire of the mountain  
 was lilies in lieu of snow,  
 And the lilies like glaciers winded down,  
 running o it below  
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy the  
 blaze of verme, and the blue,  
 Of millions of roses that sprang without  
 leaf or a thorn from the bush,  
 And the whole isle-side flashing down  
 from the peak without ever a tree  
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky  
 to the blue of the sea,  
 And we roll'd up on carpets of crocus and  
 vaunted our lith and our lin,  
 And we wallow'd in beds o' lilies, and  
 chanted the triumph of Finn,  
 Till each like a golden image was pollen'd  
 from head to feet  
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with  
 thirst in the middle dry heart  
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
 blossom, but never a fruit I  
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we  
 hated the isle that was mute,  
 And we tore up the flowers by the million  
 and flung them in hight and bry,  
 And we left but a naked rock, and in  
 anger we sail'd away

vi

And we came to the Isle of Fruits all  
 round from the cliffs and the capes,  
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
 fathom of grapes,  
 And the warm melon lay like a little sun  
 on the winny sand,  
 And the fig ran up from the beach and  
 rioted over the land,  
 And the mountain rose like a jewell'd  
 throne thro' the fragrant air,

Glowing with a colour'd plume and with  
 golden masses of pear,  
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
 that flamed upon bine and vine  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine,  
 And the perk of the mountain was apples,  
 the hugest that ever were seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, one to other  
 with hardly a leaflet between,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest health  
 or th in utterest shame,  
 And setting, when I've descended, the  
 very sunset shame,  
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged  
 and we madden'd, till every one  
 drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and  
 ever they struck and they fell,  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and  
 fought till I sunder'd the fry,  
 Then I had them remember my father's  
 death, and we sail'd away

vii

And we came to the Isle of Fire we were  
 lured by the light from afar,  
 I or the peak sent up one league of fire  
 to the Northern Star,  
 Lured by the glare and the glare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 I or the whole isle shudder'd and shoo'd  
 like a man in a mortal affright,  
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we  
 had gorged, and so cried that at  
 last  
 There were some leap'd in o the fire,  
 and away we sail'd, and we past  
 Over that undersea isle, where the water  
 is clearer than air  
 Down we look'd what a garden! O  
 bliss, what a Paradise there!  
 Towers of a happier time, low down in  
 a rainbow deep  
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal  
 sleep!  
 And three of the gentlest and best of my  
 people, whatever I could say,  
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the  
 Paradise trembled away

## VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where  
 the heavens lean low on the land,  
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd  
 o'er us a sunbright hand,  
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of  
 each man, as he rose from his  
 rest,  
 Bread enough for his need till the labour  
 less day dipt under the West :  
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it.  
 O never was time so good !  
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and  
 the boist of our ancient blood,  
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as  
 we sat by the gurgle of springs,  
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards  
 and the glories of fury kings,  
 But at length we began to be weary, to  
 sigh, and to stretch and yawn,  
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the  
 sunbright hand of the dawn,  
 For there was not an enemy near, but the  
 whole green Isle was our own,  
 And we took to playing at ball, and we  
 took to throwing the stone,  
 And we took to playing at battle, but  
 that was a perilous play,  
 For the passion of battle was in us, we  
 slew and we sail'd away

## IX

And we past to the Isle of Witches and  
 heard their musical cry —  
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the  
 stormy red of a sky  
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,  
 For a wild witch naked as heaven stood  
 on each of the loftiest capes,  
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
 white sea-birds in a row,  
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
 on the wrecks in the sand below,  
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges,  
 and bosom'd the burst of the  
 spray,  
 But I knew we should fall on each other,  
 and hastily sail'd away

## X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle  
 of the Double Towers,  
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved  
 all over with flowers,  
 But an earthquake always moved in the  
 hollows under the dells,  
 And they shock'd on each other and butted  
 each other with clashing of bells,  
 And the daws flew out of the Towers and  
 jangled and wrangled in vain,  
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang  
 into the heart and the brain,  
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and  
 all took sides with the Towers,  
 There were some for the clean-cut stone,  
 there were more for the carved  
 flowers,  
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd  
 over us all the day,  
 For the one half slew the other, and after  
 we sail'd away

## XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who  
 had sail'd with St Brendan of  
 yore,  
 He had lived ever since on the Isle and  
 his winters were fifteen score,  
 And his voice was low as from other  
 worlds, and his eyes were sweet,  
 And his white hair sank to his heels and  
 his white beard fell to his feet,  
 And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let  
 be this purpose of thine '  
 Remember the words of the Lord when  
 he told us "Vengeance is mine"  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war  
 or in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each  
 taken a life for a life,  
 Thy father had slain his father, how long  
 shall the murder last ?  
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
 the Past to be Past '  
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and  
 we pray'd as we heard him pray,  
 And the Holy man he assail'd us, and  
 sadly we sail'd away.

## XII

And we came to the Isle we were blown  
 from, and there on the shore was he,  
 The man that had slain my father I  
 saw him and let him be  
 O weary was I of the travel, the trouble,  
 the strife and the sin,  
 When I landed again, with a tithe of my  
 men, on the Isle of Finn

## DE PROFUNDIS

## THE TWO GREETINGS

To II T AUGUST 11, 1852.

## I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
 Waste dawn of multitudinous eddying  
 light—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,

Thro' all this changing world of change-  
 less law,

And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
 And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
 With this last moon, this crescent—her  
 dark orb

Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest,  
 darling boy,

Our own, a babe in lineament and limb  
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man,  
 Whose face and form are hers and mine  
 in one,

Indissolubly married like our love,  
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
 This mortal race thy kin so well, that men  
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O young  
 life

Breaking with laughter from the dark,  
 and may

The fated channel where thy motion lives  
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
 course

Along the years of haste and random youth  
 Unshatter'd, then full-current thro' full  
 man

And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,  
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
 To that last deep where we and thou are  
 still

## II

## I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,

From that great deep, before our world  
 begins,

Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he  
 will—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,

From that true world within the world  
 we see,

Whereof our world is but the bounding  
 shore—

Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
 With this ninth moon, that sends the  
 hidden sun

Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling  
 boy

## II

For in the world, which is not ours, They  
 said

'Let us make man' and that which  
 should be man,

From that one light no man can look upon,  
 Drew to 'his shore lit by the suns and  
 moons

And all the shadows O dear Spirit  
 half-lost

In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign  
 That thou art thou—who wailest being  
 born

And banish'd into mystery, and the pun  
 Of this divisible-indivisible world  
 Among the numerable innumerable  
 Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
 space

In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil  
 And shatter'd phantom of that infinite  
 One,

Who made thee unconceivably Thyself  
 Out of His whole World self and all in  
 all—

Live thou ! and of the grain and hush,  
the grape  
And ivyberry, choose, and still depart  
From death to death thro' life and life,  
and find  
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
wrought  
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
With power on thine own act and on the  
world

THE HUMAN COPY

I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Halleluah !—  
Infinite Ideality !  
Immeasurable Reality !  
Infinite Personality !  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluah !

II

We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou  
and in Thee,  
We feel we are something—that also has  
come from Thee,  
We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt  
help us to be  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluah !

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled far and fast  
To touch all shores, now leaving to the  
skill  
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
Have charter'd this, where, mindful of  
the past,  
Our true co-mates regather round the  
mast,  
Of diverse tongue, but with a common  
will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
And crocus, to put forth and brave the  
blast,  
For some, descending from the sacred  
peak

Of hoar high temple'd Faith, have leagued  
again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world  
about,  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to  
seek  
If any golden harbour be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
Doubt

TO THE REV W H BROOK-  
FIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew  
you best,  
Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth  
my rhymes,  
How oft we two have heard St Mary's  
chimes !  
How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
guest,  
Would echo helpless laughter to your  
jest !  
How oft with him we paced that walk of  
limes,  
Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden  
times,  
Who loved you well ! Now both are gone  
to rest  
You man of humorous melancholy mark,  
Dead of some inward agony—is it so ?  
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away !  
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark  
Σκιάς ὄναρ—dream of a shadow, go—  
God bless you I shall join you in a  
day

MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle  
sails,  
They kept their faith, their freedom, on  
the height,  
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and  
night  
Against the Turk, whose inroad nowhere  
scales  
Their headlong passes, but his footstep  
fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels  
 from fight  
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone  
 flight  
 By thousands down the crags and thro'  
 the vales  
 O smallest among peoples' rough rock  
 throne  
 Of Freedom! warriors beating back the  
 swarm  
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine own  
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
 the storm  
 Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
 taineers

### TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and  
 fears,

French of the French, and Lord of human  
 tears,  
 Child-lover! Bard whose fame-lit laurels  
 glance  
 Darkening the wreaths of all that would  
 advance,  
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy  
 peers,  
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
 years  
 As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of  
 France!  
 Who dost not love our England—so they  
 say,  
 I know not—England, France, all man  
 to be  
 Will make one people ere man's race be  
 run  
 And I, desiring that diviner day,  
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
 courtesy  
 To younger England in the boy my son.

## TRANSLATIONS, ETC

### BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Constantinus King of the Scots, after having  
 sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with  
 the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading  
 England was defeated by Athelstan and his  
 brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunan-  
 burh in the year 937

<sup>1</sup> ATHELSTAN King,  
 Lord among Earls,  
 Bracelet-bestower and  
 Baron of Barons,  
 He with his brother,  
 Edmund Atheling,  
 Gaining a lifelong  
 Glory in battle,  
 Slew with the sword edge  
 There by Brunanburh,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my  
 son's prose translation of this poem in the *Con-  
 temporary Review* (November 1876).

Brake the shield-wall,  
 Hew'd the lindenwood,<sup>2</sup>  
 Hack'd the battleshield,  
 Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

#### II

Theirs was a greatness  
 Got from their Grandsires—  
 Theirs that so often in  
 Strife with their enemies  
 Struck for their hoards and their hearths  
 and their homes

#### III

Bow'd the spoiler,  
 Bent the Scotsman,  
 Fell the shipcrews  
 Doom'd to the death  
 All the field with blood of the fighters  
 Flow'd, from when first the great  
 Sun-star of morningtide,

<sup>2</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Lamp of the Lord God  
Lord everlasting

Glode over eath til the glorious creature  
Sink to his setting

IV

There lay man, a man  
Mort'd by the javelin,  
Man of the Northland  
Shot over shield.  
There was the Scots-man  
Wearry of war

V

We the West-Saxons,  
Long as the day light  
Lasted in companies

Troubled the track of the foot that we  
hated,  
Gaily with words that were sharp from  
the grindstone,  
Fiercely we backed at the flyers before  
us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,  
Hard as his hand play,  
Sparing not any of  
Those that with Anlaf,  
Warriors over the  
Weltering waters  
Borne in the barl's bosom,  
Drew to this island  
Doom'd to the death

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-  
stroke,  
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
Fell on the war field, numberless numbers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen

VIII

Then the Norse leader,  
Dire was his need of it,  
Few were his following,  
Fled to his warship

Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
in it,  
Saving his life on the fallow flood

IX

Also the crafty one,  
Constantinus,  
Crept to his North again,  
Horn-headed hero<sup>1</sup>

X

Slender warrant had  
He to be proud of  
The welcome of war knives—  
He that was rest of his  
folk and his friends that had  
Fallen in conflict,  
Leaving his son too  
Lost in the carnage,  
Mangled to morsels,  
A youngster in war!

XI

Slender reason had  
He to be glad of  
The clash of the war glaive—  
Trutor and trickster  
And spurner of treaties—  
He nor had Anlaf  
With armies so broken  
A reason for bragging  
That they had the better  
In perils of battle  
On places of slaughter—  
The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crush of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
The wielding of weapons—  
The play that they play'd with  
The children of Edward

XII

Then with their nail'd prows  
Parted the Norsemen, a  
Blood redden'd relic of  
Javelins over  
The jarring breaker, the deep  
sea billow,  
Shaping their way toward Dy  
flen<sup>2</sup> again,  
Shamed in their souls

<sup>1</sup> Lit 'the gathering of men'    <sup>2</sup> Dublin

## VIII

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-  
land,  
Glad of the war

## XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it,  
and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend  
it, and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge  
it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald

## XI

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge—  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories—  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land

## ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

ILIAD, XVIII 202

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away  
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus, and  
round  
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas  
flung  
Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden  
cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining  
flame.  
As when a smoke from a city goes to  
heaven  
Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
All day the men contend in grievous  
war  
From their own city, but with set of  
sun  
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
glare  
Flies streaming, if perchance the neigh-  
bours round  
May see, and sail to help them in the  
war,  
So from his head the splendour went to  
heaven  
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
nor join'd  
The Achæans—honouring his wise  
mother's word—  
There standing, shouted, and Pallas far  
away  
Call'd, and a boundless panic shook the  
foe  
For like the clear voice when a trumpet  
shrills,  
Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a  
town,  
So rang the clear voice of *Æakidês*,  
And when the brazen cry of *Æakidês*  
Was heard among the Trojans, all their  
hearts  
Were troubled, and the full-maned horses  
whirl'd  
The chariots backward, knowing griefs  
at hand,  
And sheer-astounded were the charioteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great *Peleion's*  
head  
Burn'd, for the bright eyed goddess made  
it burn  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty  
shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and  
allies,  
And there and then twelve of their noblest  
died  
Among their spears and chariots

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA  
ON HER MARRIAGE

O you that were eyes and light to the  
King till he part away  
From the darkness of life—  
He saw not his daughter—he blest her  
The blind King sees you to day  
He blesses the wife

## SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

ON THE CRIOGRAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY

Not here! the white North has the  
bones, and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole

## TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE  
FLORENTINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years,  
and grown  
In power, and ever growest, since thine  
own  
Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from  
me,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades  
away

## TIRESIAS

## AND OTHER POEMS

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING,

WHOSE GENIUS AND GINIALLITY WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST,  
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST,  
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

## TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange  
Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile,  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,  
And while your doves about you sit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers,  
Who live on milk and meal and grass,  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,

And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied'  
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half spiritual height  
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again  
One night when earth was winter-black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost,  
And on me, half asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,  
And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there roll'd  
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes  
Of Eshcol hugeness, for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me, wrought  
To mould the dream, but none can say  
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought  
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,



Than which I know no version done  
 In English more divinely well,  
 A planet equal to the sun  
 Which cast it, that large infidel  
 Your Omar, and your Omar drew  
 Full handed plaudits from our best  
 In modern letters, and from two,  
 Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
 Two voices heard on earth no more,  
 But we old friends are still alive,  
 And I am nearing seventy four,  
 While you have touch'd at seventy five,  
 And so I send a birthday line  
 Of greeting, and my son, who dipt  
 In some forgotten book of mine  
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
 And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise

### TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
 While yet the blessed drylight made itself  
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and  
 woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen  
 'o seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all they  
 saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to man  
 And woman, and the secret of the Gods  
 My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human kings  
 The great God, Arès, burns in anger still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
 Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dirce, smote, and  
 still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling fathers  
 call'd

The God's own son  
 A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as winter-  
 white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me  
 yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more than man  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and  
 lays the deep,  
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways of  
 men  
 Then, in my wanderings all the lands  
 that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my  
 wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the nearer  
 God  
 One naked peak—the sister of the sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there  
 To silver all the valleys with her shafts—  
 There once, but long ago, five fold thy  
 term  
 Of years, I lay, the winds were dead  
 for heat,  
 The noonday crag made the hand burn,  
 and sick  
 For shadow—not one bush was near—  
 I rose  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows underneath  
 There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
 In anger, yet one glittering foot disturb'd  
 The lucid well, one snowy knee was prest  
 Against the margin flowers, a dreadful  
 light  
 Came from her golden hair, her golden  
 helm  
 And all her golden armour on the grass,  
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew  
 dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said  
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen  
 too much,

And speak the truth that no man may  
believe'

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that  
lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her still,  
Beyond all work of those who carve the  
stone,

Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-  
hood,

Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a  
glance,

And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd  
The power of prophesying—but to me

No power—so chain'd and coupled with  
the curse

Of blindness and their unbelief, who  
heard

And heard not, when I spake of famine,  
plague,

Shrine shattering earthquake, fire, flood,  
thunderbolt,

And angers of the Gods for evil done  
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,

Theirs, or mine own' for when the  
crowd would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their  
doom,

To cast wise words among the multitude  
Was flinging fruit to lions, nor, in  
hours

Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain  
Would each waste each, and bring on  
both the joke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to  
curb

The madness of our cities and their  
kings

Who e'er turn'd upon his heel to hear  
My warning that the tyranny of one

Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
My counsel that the tyranny of all

Led backward to the tyranny of one?  
This power hath work'd no good to

ought that lives,  
And these blind hands were useless in

their wars  
O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,

The grief for ever born from griefs to be,  
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's

heart—

Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue,  
rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise  
from all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'  
In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and  
those

Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd  
Within themselves, immersing, each, his  
urn

In his own well, draw solace as he may  
Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can  
hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
Our seven high gates, and what a weight  
of war

Rides on those ringing axles' jingle of  
bits,

Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted  
horse

That grind the glebe to powder! Stony  
showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash  
Along the sounding walls Above,  
below,

Shock after shock, the song-built towers  
and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the  
shuddering

War-thunder of iron rams, and from  
within

The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
Lest she be taken captive—maidens,  
wives,

And mothers with their babblers of the  
dawn,

And oldest age in shadow from the  
night,

Falling about their shrines before their  
Gods,

And wailing 'Save us'  
And they wail to thee!

These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine  
own,

See this, that only in thy virtue lies  
The saving of our Thebes, for, yester-  
night,

To me, the great God Arès, whose one  
bliss

Is war, and human sacrifice—himself  
Blood red from battle, spear and helmet  
tipt

With stormy light as on a mast at sea,  
Stood out before a darkness, crying  
'Thebes,

Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I  
loathe

The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these  
By his own hand—if one of these—'

My son,  
No sound is breathed so potent to  
coerce,

And to conciliate, as their names who  
dare

For that sweet mother land which gave  
them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die Their names,  
Graven on memorial columns, are a  
song

Heard in the future, few, but more than  
wall

And rampart, their examples reach a  
hand

Far thro' all years, and everywhere they  
meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the  
strength

To mould it into action pure as theirs  
Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best  
end

Be to end well I and thou refusing this,  
Unvenerable will thy memory be  
While men shall move the lips but if  
thou dare—

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus  
—then

No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious  
doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy  
name

To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
springs

Of Dirce laying yonder battle plain,  
Heard from the roofs by night, will mur-  
mur thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro'  
thee shall stand

Firm hazed with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave  
Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
vines—

Where once he dwelt and whence he  
roll'd himself

At dead of night—thou knowest, and  
that smooth rock

Before it, altar fashion'd, where of late  
The woman breast'd Sphinx with wings  
drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
Thebes

There blench the bones of whom she  
slew, and these

Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
beast found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself  
Dead in her rage but thou art wise  
enough,

Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the  
curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the  
truth

Believe I speak it, let thine own hand  
strike

Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench  
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge  
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—  
thou

Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the  
stars

Send no such light upon the ways of men  
As one great deed

Thither, my son, and there  
Thou, that hast never known the embrace  
of love,

Offer thy maiden life

This useless hand!  
I felt one warm tear fall upon it Gone!  
He will achieve his greatness

But for me,  
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,  
And mingled with the famous kings of  
old,

On whom about their ocean-islets flash  
The faces of the Gods—the wise man's  
word,

Here trampled by the populace underfoot,  
There crown'd with worship—and these  
eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot  
whirl  
About the goal again and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the varriot  
kings,  
In height and prowess more than human,  
strive  
Agon for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears  
Heroic hymns, and every way the viles  
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense  
fume  
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods  
On one far height in one far shining fire

‘One height and one far shining fire’  
And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require  
A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,  
If I should deem it over nice—  
The tolling of his funeral bell  
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And met the dream of classic times  
And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the rhymes,  
That miss’d his living welcome, seem  
Like would be guests in hour too late,  
Who down the highway moving on  
With easy laughter find the gate  
Is bolted, and the master gone  
Gone into darkness, that full light  
Of friendship I past, in sleep, away  
By night, into the deeper night!  
The deeper night? A cleverer day  
Than our poor twilight lawn on earth—  
If night, what barren toil to be!  
What life, so murd’r’d by night, were  
worth

Our living out? Not mine to me  
Remembering all the golden hours  
Not silent, and so many dead,  
And him the last, and lying flowers,  
This wreath, above his honour’d head,  
And praying that, when I from hence  
Shall fade with him into the unknown,  
My close of earth’s experience  
May prove as peaceful as his own

## THE WRECK

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers belong’d  
to the church of old,  
I am driven by storm and sin and death  
to the ancient fold,  
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more,  
to the Faith that saves,  
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,  
and the roar of waves,  
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a  
noble name,  
I am flung from the rushing tide of the  
world as a waif of shame,  
I am roused by the wail of a child, and  
awake to a livid light,  
And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted  
a grave by night,  
I would hide from the storm without, I  
would flee from the storm within,  
I would make my life one prayer for a  
soul that died in his sin,  
I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was  
the deeper fall,  
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face,  
I will tell you all

II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a  
heedless and innocent bride—  
I never have wrong’d his heart, I have  
only wounded his pride—  
Spun in his blood and the Jew—dark  
visaged, stately and tall—  
A princelier looking man never slept thro’  
a Prince’s hall  
And who, when his anger was kindled,  
would venture to give him the nay?  
And a man men fear is a man to be loved  
by the women they say  
And I could have loved him too, if the  
blossom can doat on the blight,  
Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost  
that sears it at night,  
He would open the books that I prized  
and toss them away with a yawn

Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which  
 my nature was drawn  
 The word of the Poet by whom the deeps  
 of the world are stirr'd,  
 The music that robes it in language beneath  
 and beyond the word—  
 My Shelley would fall from my hands when  
 he cast a contemptuous glance  
 From where he was poring over his  
 Tables of Trade and Finance,  
 My hands, when I heard him coming  
 would drop from the chords or the  
 keys,  
 But ever I fail'd to please him, however  
 I strove to please—  
 All day long far off in the cloud of the  
 city, and there  
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances of  
 dividend, consol and share—  
 And at home if I sought for a kindly  
 caress, being woman and weak,  
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow  
 on the cheek  
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when I  
 held it aloft in my joy,  
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me  
 'Pity it isn't a boy'  
 The one thing given me, to love and to  
 live for, glanced at in scorn!  
 The child that I felt I could die for—as  
 if she were basely born!  
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted  
 now in a tomb,  
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed  
 my heart to the gloom,  
 I threw myself all abroad—I would play  
 my part with the young  
 By the low foot lights of the world—and  
 I caught the wreath that was flung

## III

Mother, I have not—however their  
 tongues may have babbled of me—  
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all  
 but a dwarf was he,  
 And all but a hunchback too, and I  
 look'd at him, first, askance,  
 With pity—not he the knight for an  
 amorous girl's romance!

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in  
 the light of a dowerless smile,  
 Having lands at home and abroad in a  
 rich West-Indian isle,  
 But I came on him once at a ball, the  
 heart of a listening crowd—  
 Why, what a brow was there! he was  
 seated—speaking aloud  
 To women, the flower of the time, and  
 men at the helm of state—  
 Flowing with easy greatness and touch-  
 ing on all things great,  
 Science, philosophy, song—till I felt my-  
 self ready to weep  
 For I knew not what, when I heard that  
 voice,—as mellow and deep  
 As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd  
 from an organ—roll  
 Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice  
 was the voice of the soul,  
 And the sun of the soul made dry in the  
 dark of his wonderful eyes  
 Here was the hand that would help me,  
 would heal me—the heart that  
 was wise!  
 And he, poor man, when he learnt that  
 I hated the ring I wore,  
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd  
 me with sorrow for evermore.

## IV

For I broke the bond That day my  
 nurse had brought me the child  
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but it  
 coo'd to the Mother and smiled  
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with  
 baby?' She shook her head,  
 And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and  
 turn'd in her haste and fled

## V

Low warm winds had gently breathed us  
 away from the land—  
 Ten long sweet summer days upon deck,  
 sitting hand in hand—  
 When he clothed a naked mind with the  
 wisdom and wealth of his own,  
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave to  
 his intellectual throne,

When he could into English gold some  
 treasure of classical song,  
 When he had a stranger's error, or  
 flamed at a public wrong,  
 When he rose as it were on the wings of  
 an eagle beyond me and past  
 Over the range and the change of the  
 world from the first to the last,  
 When he spoke of his tropical home in  
 the emerald, the purple tide,  
 And the high star crowns of his palms on  
 the deep wooded mountain side  
 And curlew all round in lanes that dropt  
 to the brink of his bay,  
 And trees like the towers of a minster,  
 'The sons of a winterless day  
 'Paradise there' so he said, but I stem'd  
 in Paradise then  
 With the first great love I had felt for the  
 first and greatest of men,  
 Ten long days of summer and sun—if it  
 must be so—  
 But days of a larger light than I ever  
 again shall know—  
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life  
 to my latest breath,  
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest  
 Love no Death'

## VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble  
 plaintively sweet  
 Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
 fluttering down at my feet,  
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled  
 it, Stephen and I,  
 But it died, and I thought of the child  
 for a moment, I scarce know why

## VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as  
 many will say,  
 My sin to my desolate little one found  
 me at set on a day,  
 When her orphan wail came borne in the  
 shriek of a growing wind,  
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of  
 Ocean and Heaven 'Thou hast  
 sinn'd'

And down in the cabin were we, for the  
 towering crest of the tides  
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
 cataract off from her sides,  
 And ever the great storm grew with a  
 howl and a hoot of the blast  
 In the rigging, voices of hell—then came  
 the crash of the mast  
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there I  
 began to weep,  
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast  
 me into the deep,  
 I or ah God, what a heart was mine to  
 forsake her even for you'  
 'Never the heart among women,' he said,  
 'more tender and true'  
 'The heart! not a mother's heart, when  
 I left my darling alone'  
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the  
 father will care for his own'  
 'The heart of the father will spurn her,'  
 I cried, 'for the sin of the wife,  
 The cloud of the mother's shame will  
 enfold her and darken her life'  
 Then his pale face twitch'd, 'O Stephen,  
 I love you, I love you, and yet—'  
 As I lean'd away from his arms—'would  
 God, we had never met'  
 And he spoke not—only the storm, till  
 after a little, I yearn'd  
 For his voice again, and he call'd to me  
 'Kiss me' and there—as I  
 turn'd—  
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I  
 clung to the sinking form,  
 And the storm went roaring above us,  
 and he—was out of the storm

## VIII

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger'd  
 under a thunderous shock,  
 That shook us asunder, as if she had  
 struck and crash'd on a rock,  
 For a huge sea smote every soul from the  
 decks of The Falcon but one,  
 All of them, all but the man that was  
 lash'd to the helm had gone,  
 And I fell—and the storm and the days  
 went by, but I knew no more—

Lost myself—lay like the dead by the  
dead on the cabin floor,  
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to  
the loss that was mine,  
With a dim dream, now and then, of a  
hand giving bread and wine,  
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship  
stood still, and the skies were  
blue,  
But the face I had known, O Mother,  
was not the face that I knew

## IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw  
so amazed me, that I  
Stumbled on deck, half mad I would  
fling myself over and die!  
But one—he was waving a flag—the one  
man left on the wreck—  
'Woman'—he graspt at my arm—'stay  
there'—I crouch'd upon deck—  
'We are sinking, and yet there's hope  
look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail'  
In a tone so rough that I broke into  
passionate tears, and the wail  
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat  
was nearing us—then  
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look  
on the child again

## X

They lower'd me down the side, and  
there in the boat I lay  
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea home,  
as we glided away,  
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt  
under the smiling main,  
'Had I stry'd with him, I had now—  
with him—been out of my pain.'

## XI

They took us aboard the crew were  
gentle, the captain kind,  
But I was the lonely slave of an often  
wandering mind,  
For whenever a rougher gust might  
tumble a stormier wave,  
'O Stephen,' I moan'd 'I am coming  
to thee in thine Ocean-grave'

And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd  
over a perceller sea,  
I found myself moaning again 'O child,  
I am coming to thee'

## XII

The broad white brow of the Isle—that  
bay with the colour'd sand—  
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we  
drew to the land,  
All so quiet the ripple would hardly  
blanch into spray  
At the feet of the cliff, and I pray'd—  
'my child'—for I still could  
pray—  
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be  
never gloom'd by the curse  
Of a sin, not hers'

Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse  
Who had borne my flower on her luring  
heart, and an answer came  
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife  
—to her maiden name!  
I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew  
that hand too well—  
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the  
'deaths' in a paper, fell  
'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever,  
and want of care!  
And gone—that day of the storm—O  
Mother, she came to me there

## DESPAIR

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God,  
and hope of a life to come, and being utterly  
miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by  
drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man  
rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandon'd

## I

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel  
there looking over the sand?  
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd  
us, and drew me to land?

## II

What did I feel that night? You are  
curious How should I tell?

Does it matter so much what I felt?  
You rescued me—yet—was it  
well

That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,  
between me and the deep and my  
doom,

Three days since, three more dark days  
of the Godless gloom

Of a life without sun, without health, with-  
out hope, without any delight

In anything here upon earth? but ah  
God, that night, that night

When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse  
there on the fatal neck

Of land running out into rock—they had  
saved many hundreds from wreck—

Glared on our way toward death, I re-  
member I thought, as we past,

Does it matter how many they saved?  
we are all of us wreck'd at last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the  
roar of the breaker a whisper, a  
breath,

'Fear? am I not with you? I am  
frighted at life not death'

III

And the suns of the limitless Universe  
sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we  
knew that their light was a lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but,  
however they sparkled and shone,

The dark little worlds running round  
them were worlds of woe like our  
own---

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on  
the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamenta-  
tion and woe

IV

See, we were nursed in the drear night  
fold of your fatalist creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we  
had hoped for a dawn indeed,

When the light of a Sun that was coming  
would scatter the ghosts of the  
Past,

T

And the cramping creeds that had  
madden'd the peoples would  
vanish at last,

And we broke away from the Christ, our  
human brother and friend,

For He spoke, or it seem'd that He  
spoke, of a Hell without help,  
without end

V

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the  
promise had faded away,

We had past from a cheerless night to  
the glare of a drearier day,

He is only a cloud and a smoke who was  
once a pillar of fire,

The guess of a worm in the dust and the  
shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the  
weak trodden down by the strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre,  
murder, and wrong

VI

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone on  
that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who knew  
not that which she bore!

Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
would be heavenly fruit—

Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls  
—and to die with the brute—

VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity I  
know you of old—

Small pity for those that have ranged from  
the narrow warmth of your fold,

Where you bawl'd the dark side of your  
futh and a God of eternal rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and  
the human heart, and the Age

VIII

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—was  
in her and in me,

Helpless, taking the place of the pitying  
God that should be!



Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an  
 idiot power,  
 And pity for our own selves on an earth  
 that bore not a flower,  
 Pity for all that suffers on land or in air  
 or the deep,  
 And pity for our own selves till we long'd  
 for eternal sleep

## IX

'Lightly step over the sands' the waters  
 —you hear them call'  
 Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
 errors—away with it all'  
 And she laid her hand in my own—she  
 was always loyal and sweet—  
 Till the points of the foam in the dusk  
 came playing about our feet  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
 sweep us out to the main  
 'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was  
 taking the name in vain—  
 'Ah God' and we turn'd to each other,  
 we kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,  
 Knowing the Love we were used to be  
 lieve everlasting would die  
 We had read their know nothing books  
 and we lean'd to the darker side—  
 Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps,  
 perhaps, if we died, if we died,  
 We never had found Him on earth, this  
 earth is a fatherless Hell—  
 'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever  
 and ever farewell,'  
 Never a cry so desolate, not since the  
 world began,  
 Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
 coming of man'

## X.

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and  
 you saved me, a valueless life  
 Not a gram of gratitude mine! You  
 have parted the man from the wife  
 I am left alone on the land, she is all  
 alone in the sea,  
 If a curse meant ought, I would curse  
 you for not having let me be

## XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was drunk  
 with the water, it seems,  
 I had past into perfect quiet at length  
 out of pleasant dreams,  
 And the transient trouble of drowning—  
 what was it when match'd with  
 the pangs  
 Of the hellish heat of a wretched life  
 rushing back thro' the veins?

## XII

Why should I live? one son had forged  
 on his father and fled,  
 And if I believed in a God, I would  
 thank him, the other is dead,  
 And there was a baby-girl, that had  
 never look'd on the light  
 Happiest she of us all, for she past from  
 the night to the night.

## XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest  
 born, her glory, her boast,  
 Struck hard at the tender heart of the  
 mother, and broke it almost,  
 Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever  
 in endless time,  
 Does it matter so much whether crown'd  
 for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime?

## XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood  
 there, naked, amazed  
 In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd  
 myself turning crazed,  
 And I would not be mock'd in a mad-  
 house' and she, the delicate wife,  
 With a grief that could only be cured, if  
 cured, by the surgeon's knife,—

## XV

Why should we bear with an hour of  
 torture, a moment of pain,  
 If every man die for ever, if all his griefs  
 are in vain,  
 And the homeless planet at length will be  
 wheel'd thro' the silence of space,

Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing  
race,

When the worm shall have writhed its  
last, and its last brother-worm  
will have fled

From the dead fossil skull that is left in  
the rocks of an earth that is dead?

## XXI.

Have I crazed myself over their horrible  
infidel writings? O yes,

For these are the new dark ages, you see,  
of the popular press,

When the bat comes out of his cave, and  
the owls are whooping at noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill  
and crows to the sun and the  
moon,

Till the Sun and the Moon of our science  
are both of them turn'd into blood,

And Hope will have broken her heart,  
running after a shadow of good,

For their knowing and know-nothing  
books are scatter'd from hand to  
hand—

We have knelt in your know-all chapel  
too looking over the sand

## XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite  
Love that has served us so well?

Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-  
lasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and  
does what he will with his own,

Better our dead brute mother who never  
has heard us groan!

## XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal,  
as men have been told,

The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and  
the miser would yearn for his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever! but  
were there a God as you say,

His Love would have power over Hell  
till it utterly vanish'd away

## XIX

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at  
times, in my gloomiest woe,

Of a God behind all—after all—the great  
God for aught that I know,

But the God of Love and of Hell to-  
gether—they cannot be thought,

If there be such a God, may the Great  
God curse him and bring him to  
nought!

## XX

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it  
mine? for why would you save

A madman to vex you with wretched  
words, who is best in his grave?

Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd  
beyond hope of grace?

O would I were yonder with her, and  
away from your faith and your  
face!

Blasphemy! true! I have scared you  
pale with my scandalous talk,

But the blasphemy to my mind lies all in  
the way that you walk

## XXI

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I  
breathe divorced from the Past?

You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I  
do not escape you at last

Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find  
it a *felo de-se*,

And the stake and the cross-road, fool,  
if you will, does it matter to me?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ

From out his ancient city came a Seer  
Whom one that loved, and honour'd  
him, and yet

Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his  
hand

A scroll of verse—till that old man before

A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and  
spoke

This wealth of waters might but seem to  
draw

From yon dark cave, but, son, the source  
is higher,

Yon summit half-a-league in air—and  
higher,

The cloud that hides it—higher still, the  
heavens

Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout

The cloud descended Force is from the  
heights

I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills

What hast thou there? Some deathsong  
for the Ghouls

To make their banquet relish? let me  
read

"How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard!

What power but the bird's could make  
This music in the bird?

How summer bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!

And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?

But man to day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been

The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen "

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and  
wilt dive

Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,  
There, brooding by the central altar, thou  
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a  
voice,

By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not  
know,

For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there

But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,  
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath,  
within

The blue of sky and sea, the green of  
earth,

And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,

And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,

Or even than the Nameless is to me  
And when thou sendest thy free son  
thro' heaven,

Nor understandest bound nor boundless  
ness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred  
names

And if the Nameless should withdraw  
from all

Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark

"And since—from when this earth  
began—

The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O  
my son,

Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,

Thou canst not prove that thou art body  
alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit  
alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art both  
in one

Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, nor  
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my  
son,

Thou canst not prove that I, who speak  
with thee,

Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
For nothing worthy proving can be  
proven,

Nor yet disproven wherefore thou be  
wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of  
Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring  
words,  
She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and  
'No,'  
She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the  
Worst,  
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
She spies the summer thro' the winter  
bud,  
She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,  
She hears the lark within the songless egg,  
She finds the fountain where they wul'd  
'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind  
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
That none but Gods could build this  
house of ours,  
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
all work of man, yet, like all work of  
man,  
A beauty with defect—till That which  
knows,  
And is not known, but felt thro' what we  
feel  
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend  
On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
last  
According to the Highest in the Highest

"What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,  
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?  
What rulers but the Days and Hours  
That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flowers,  
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing  
by,  
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
shade,  
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
Pain;

But with the Nameless is nor Day nor  
Hour,  
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,  
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the  
Eternal Now  
This double seeming of the single world!—  
My words are like the babblings in a  
dream  
Of nightmare, when the babblings break  
the dream  
But thou be wise in this dream-world of  
ours,  
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
But make the passing shadow serve thy  
will

"The years that made the stripling wise  
Undo their work again,  
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
The last and least of men,  
Who clings to earth, and once would dart  
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
And now one breath of cooler air  
Would loose him from his hold,  
His winter chills him to the root,  
He withers marrow and mind,  
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
Is jutting thro' the rind,  
The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
The palsy wags his head,  
The wife, the sons, who love him best  
Would fain that he were dead,  
The griefs by which he once was wrung  
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow  
life  
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
But wakes a dotard smile"

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the  
past  
Is feeblér than his knees,  
The passive sailor wrecks at last  
In ever-silent seas,

The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
 The Learned all his lore,  
 The changing market frets or charms  
 The merchant's hope no more,  
 The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
 And now is lost in cloud,  
 The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
 To mix with whet he plow'd,  
 The poet whom his Age would quote  
 As heir of endless fame—  
 He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,  
 Not even his own name.  
 For man has overlied his day  
 And, darkening in the light,  
 Scarce feels the senses break away  
 To mix with ancient Night "

The shell must break before the bird can fly

"The years that when my Youth began  
 Had set the lily and rose  
 By all my ways where'er they ran,  
 Have ended mortal foes;  
 My rose of love for ever gone,  
 My lily of truth and trust—  
 They made her lily and rose in one,  
 And changed her into dust  
 O rosetree planted in my grief,  
 And growing, on her tomb,  
 Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
 Her blood is in your bloom  
 O slender lily waving there,  
 And hushing back the light,  
 In vain you tell me 'Earth is fur'  
 When all is dark as night "

My son, the world is dark with griefs and  
 graves,  
 So dark that men cry out against the  
 Heavens  
 Who knows but that the darkness is in  
 man?  
 The doors of Night may be the gates of  
 Light,  
 For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and  
 then  
 Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory  
 in all  
 The splendours and the voices of the  
 world'

And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet  
 No phantoms, watching from a phantom  
 shore

Await the last and largest sense to make  
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,  
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
 As laughter over wine,  
 And vain the laughter as the tears,  
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that weep  
 And all that breathe are one  
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
 That moves, and all is gone "

But that one ripple on the boundless deep  
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
 itself  
 For ever changing form, but evermore  
 One with the boundless motion of the  
 deep

"Yet wine and laughter friends! and set  
 The lamps alight, and call  
 For golden music, and forget  
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my  
 son—  
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart  
 the heavens  
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and  
 yonder—out  
 To northward—some that never set, but  
 pass  
 From sight and night to lose themselves  
 in day  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,  
 And wish the dead, as happier than our  
 selves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step  
 beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne in  
 white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
 hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and  
 crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to day  
Without their hope of wings,"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent World  
Of that world prophet in the heart of man

"Tho' some have gleams or so they say  
Of more than mortal things"

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft  
On me, when boy, there came whir' then  
I call'd,

Who knew no books and no philosophies,  
In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the  
Past'

The first gray streak of earliest summer-  
dawn,

The last long stripe of waning crimson  
gloom,

As if the late and early were but one—  
A heath, a broken grange, a grove, a  
flower

Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost  
and gone'

A breath, a whisper—some divine fare-  
well—

Desolate sweetness—far and far away—  
What had he loved, what had he lost,  
the boy?

I know not and I speak of what has been  
And more, my son' for more than  
once when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
The word that is the symbol of myself,  
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven I touch'd my limbs,  
the limbs

Were strange not mine—and yet no shade  
of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as match'd  
with ours

Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in  
words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
world

"And idle gleams will come and go,  
But still the clouds remain,"

The clouds themselves are children of the  
Sun

"And Night and Shadow rule below  
When only Day should reign"

And Day and Night are children of the  
Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me  
Some say, the Light was father of the  
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the  
Light,

No night no day—I touch thy world  
again—

No ill no good! such counter-terms, my  
son,

Are border rices, holding, each its own  
By endless war but night enough is there  
In yon dark city get thee back and  
since

The key to that weird casket, which for  
thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than man,  
Or in man's hand when man is more than  
man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,  
And make thy gold thy vassal not thy  
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,  
And send the day into the darken'd heart,

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
A dying echo from a falling wall,

Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil eye—  
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold  
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
looms,

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,  
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied  
wine,

Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,  
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting,

Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,  
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wan-  
tonness;

And more—think well! Do-well will  
follow thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world

An evil thought may soil thy children's  
blood,  
But curb the beast would cast thee in the  
mire,  
And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-  
ness

A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,  
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the  
wheel,  
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence,  
if thou

Look higher, then—perchance—thou  
mayest—beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow  
—see

The high-heaven dawn of more than  
mortal day

Strike on the Mount of Vision '  
So, farewell

## √ THE FLIGHT

### I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?  
do not sleep, my sister dear!

How *can* you sleep? the morning brings  
the day I hate and fear,

The cock has crow'd already once, he  
crows before his time,

Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the  
hills are white with rime

### II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,  
fold me to your breast!

Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and  
cry myself to rest!

To rest? to rest and wake no more were  
better rest for me,

Than to waken every morning to that  
face I loathe to see.

### III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so  
calm you lay,

The night was calm, the morn is calm,  
and like another day,

But I could wish yon moaning sea would  
rise and burst the shore,  
And such a whirlwind blow these woods,  
as never blew before

### IV

For, one by one, the stars went down  
across the gleaming pane,  
And project after project rose, and all of  
them were vain,

The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls  
and leaves the bitter sloe,

The hope I catch at vanishes and youth  
is turn'd to woe

### V

Come, speak a little comfort! all night  
I pray'd with tears,

And yet no comfort came to me, and  
now the morn appears,

When he will tear me from your side,  
who bought me for his slave

This father pays his debt with me, and  
weds me to my grave

### VI

What father, this or mine, was he, who,  
on that summer day

When I had fall'n from off the crag we  
clamber'd up in play,

Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and  
took and kiss'd me, and again

He kiss'd me, and I loved him then,  
he *was* my father then

### VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a  
tyrant vice!

The Godless Jephtha vows his child  
to one cast of the dice

These ancient woods, this Hall at last  
will go—perhaps have gone,

Except his own meek daughter yield her  
life, heart, soul to one—

### VIII

To one who knows I scorn him O the  
formal mocking bow,

The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that  
 masks his malice now—  
 But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of  
 all things ill—  
 It is not Love but Hate that weds, a  
 bride against her will,

## IX

Hate, that would pluck from this true  
 breast the locket that I wear,  
 The precious crystal into which I braided  
 Edwin's hair!  
 The love that keeps this heart alive beats  
 on it night and day—  
 One golden curl, his golden gift, before  
 he past away.

## X

He left us weeping in the woods, his  
 boat was on the sand;  
 How slowly down the rocks he went,  
 how loth to quit the land!  
 And all my life was darken'd, as I saw  
 the white sail run,  
 And darken, up that lane of light into  
 the setting sun

## XI

How often have we watch'd the sun fade  
 from us thro' the West,  
 And follow Edwin to those isles, those  
 islands of the Blest!  
 Is he not there? would I were there, the  
 friend, the bride, the wife,  
 With him, where summer never dies,  
 with Love, the Sun, of life!

## XII

O would I were in Edwin's arms—once  
 more—to feel his breath  
 Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship, with  
 Edwin, ev'n in death,  
 Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the  
 death-white sea should rave,  
 Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows  
 of the wave

## XIII

Shall I take him? I kneel with him? I  
 swear and swear forsworn  
 To love him most, whom most I loathe,  
 to honour whom I scorn?  
 The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
 yawn, my mother's ghost would  
 rise—  
 To lie, to lie—in God's own house—the  
 blackest of all lies!

## XIV

Why—rather than that hand in mine,  
 tho' every pulse would freeze,  
 I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of  
 some foul disease  
 Wed him? I will not wed him, let them  
 spurn me from the doors,  
 And I will wander till I die about the  
 barren moors

## XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her  
 bridegroom on her bridal night—  
 If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if she  
 were in the right  
 My father's madness makes me mad—  
 but words are only words!  
 I am not mad, not yet, not quite—There!  
 listen how the birds

## XVI

Began to warble yonder in the budding  
 orchard trees!  
 The lark has past from earth to Heaven  
 upon the morning breeze!  
 How gladly, were I one of those, how  
 early would I wake!  
 And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow  
 for his sake

## XVII

They love their mates, to whom they  
 sing, or else their songs, that meet  
 The morning with such music, would  
 never be so sweet!  
 And tho' these fathers will not hear, the  
 blessed Heavens are just,



And Love is fire, and burns the feet  
would trample it to dust

## XVIII

A door was open'd in the house—who?  
who? my father sleeps!  
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—some  
one—this way creeps!  
If he? yes, he lurks, listens, fears  
his victim may have fled—  
He! where is some sharp pointed thing?  
he comes, and finds me dead

## XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but  
how my temples burn!  
And idle fancies flitter me, I know not  
where to turn,  
Speak to me, sister; counsel me, this  
marriage must not be  
You only know the love that makes the  
world a world to me!

## XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but  
we were left alone  
That other left us to ourselves, he cared  
not for his own,  
So all the summer long we roam'd in  
these wild woods of ours,  
My Edwin loved to call us then 'His  
two wild woodland flowers'

## XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in  
God's free light and air,  
Wild flowers of the secret woods, when  
Edwin found us there,  
Wild woods in which we roved with him,  
and heard his passionate vow,  
Wild woods in which we rove no more,  
if we be parted now!

## XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to  
wander forth forlorn,

We never changed a bitter word, not  
once since we were born,  
Our dying mother join'd our hands, she  
knew this father well,  
She had us love, life souls in Heaven,  
and now I fly from Hell,

## XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light  
upon some lonely shore,  
Some lodge within the waste sea dunes,  
and hear the waters roar,  
And see the ships from out the West go  
dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace, and  
lights the old church tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points  
five—O me—it strikes the hour—  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever  
ills betide!  
Anse, my own true sister, come forth!  
the world is wide

## XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes  
are dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder  
by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a friend,  
and in a distant land

## XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is  
hard, and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those  
that should be kind?  
That matters not let come what will,  
at last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth is  
equal to endure

## TOMORROW.

## I

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honour? last year—  
Standin' here be the bridge, when last  
yer Honour was here?

An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the  
mornin', 'Tomorra' says she.

What did they call her, yer Honour?  
They call'd her Molly Magee.

An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,

But there's rason in all things, yer  
Honour, for Molly was out of her  
mind

## II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night  
comin' down be the shtrame,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of  
yisther-dry in a dhrame—

Here where yer Honour seen her—there  
was but a slip of a moon,

But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her  
batchelor, Danny O'Roon—

'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the  
crathur' an' Danny says 'Troth,  
an' I been

Dhrnkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea  
at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>

But I must be lavin' ye soon' 'Ochone  
are ye goin' away?

'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he  
says 'over the say'—

'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an' I  
hard him 'Molly asthore,

I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he, 'be  
the chapel-door'

'An' whin are ye goin' to l've me?'

'O' Monday mornin'' says he,

'An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?'

'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree'

Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour,  
that had no likin' for Dan,  
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to  
come away from the man,

<sup>1</sup> Grog shop

An' Molly Magee kem flyin' across me,  
as light as a lark,

An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'  
thin wint into the dark

But warrah! the storm that night—the  
tundher, an' run that fell,

An' the shtrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the ghn'ud 'a dhrown'ded  
Hell

## III

But arth was at pace nixt mornin', an'  
Hiven in its glory smiled,

As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles  
at her sleepin' child—

Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green,  
an' she turn'd herself roun'

Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',

An' many's the time that I watch'd her  
at mass lettin' down the tear,

For the Divil a Danny was there, yer  
Honour, for forty year

## IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the  
rose an' the white o' the May,

An' yer hair as black as the night, an'  
yer eyes as bright as the day'

Achora, yer laste little whispher was  
sweet as the lilt of a bird'

Acushla, ye set me heart batun' to music  
wid ivery word'

An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in  
sich an illigant han',

An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was  
as light as snow an the lan',

An' the sun kem out of a cloud whinver  
ye walkt in the shtreet,

An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an'  
lad himself undher yer feet,

An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a  
half, me darlin', and he

'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss  
of ye, Molly Magee

## V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I  
crack'd his skull for her sake,

An' he ped me back wid the best he  
could give at ould Donovan's  
wake—

For the boys wor about her agin whin  
Dan didn't come to the fore,  
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she  
put thim all to the door  
An', afther, I thried her meself av the  
bird 'ud come to me call,  
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud lishen to  
nather at 'll, at all

## VI

An' her nabours an frinds ud consowl an'  
condowl wid her, airly and late,  
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasht  
over say to the Sassenach whate,  
He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's  
marned another wife,  
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of  
the thrauthur agin in life!  
An' to dhrame of a married man, death  
alive, is a mortal sin'  
But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promuse, an'  
shure he'll meet me agin'

## VII

An' afther her paarints had inter'd glory,  
an' both in wan day,  
She began to spake to herself, the  
crathur, an' whishper, an' say  
'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father Mo  
lowny he tuk her in han',  
'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me  
dear, av I undherstan',  
That ye'll meet your paarints agin an'  
yer Danny O'Roon afore God  
Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints,'  
an' she gev him a frindly nod,  
'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an' she  
didn't intind to desave,  
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was  
as white as the snow an a grave.

## VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
diggun' the bog, an' they foun'  
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp  
lyin' undher groun'

## IX

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me  
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
'The Divil take all the black lan', for a  
blessin' 'ud come wid the green'  
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut  
his bit o' turf for the fire?  
But och! bad scan to the bogs whin  
they swallies the man inture!  
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all  
the light an' the glow,  
An' there's hate enough shure, widout  
thim in the Divil's kitchen below

## X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard  
his Ruvence say,  
Could keep their harthen kings in the  
flesh for the Jidgemint day,  
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep  
the cat an' the dog,  
But it 'ud 'a been aiser work av they  
lived be an Irish bog

## XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they  
foun' an the grass  
Be the chapel door, an' the people 'ud  
see it that wint in to mass—  
But a frish gineration had riz, an' most  
of the ould was few,  
An' I didn't know him meself, an' none  
of the parish knew

## XII

But Molly kem limpun' up wid her stick,  
she was lamed iv a knee,  
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye  
know him, Molly Magee?'  
An' she stood up strait as the Queen of  
the world—she lifted her head—  
'He said he would meet me tomorra'  
an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

## XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye  
would start back agin into life,  
Whin we laid yez, aich by aich, at yer  
wake like husban' an' wife.

Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for  
the frinds that was gone '  
Sorra the silent throat bat we hard it  
cryin' 'Ochone !'  
An' Shamus O'Sher that has now ten  
childer, handsome an' tall,  
Him an' h's childer wor keemin' as if he  
had lost them all

## xiv.

Thin his Reverence buried them both in  
win grave be the dead boor tree,<sup>1</sup>  
The young man Danny O Roon wid his  
ould woman, Molly Magee

## xv.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosolim blossom  
an' spring from the grass,  
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye  
did—over yer Crass !  
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his  
song to the Sun an' the Moon,  
An' tell them in Hiven about Molly Magee  
an' her Danny O'Roon,  
Till Holy St. Peiter gets up wid his lays  
an' opens the gate !  
An' shure, be the Cruss, that's betther  
nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate  
To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an'  
Sunts an' Marthyrs galore,  
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for  
ever an' evermore

## xvi

An' now that I could yer Honour what-  
rever I hard an' seen,  
Yer Honour 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink  
yer health in potheen

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS.

## I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess ! fur it mun  
be the time about now  
When Molly cooms in fro' the far end  
close wi' her pails fro' the cow.

<sup>1</sup> Elder tree

Eh ! tha be new to the plaace—thou'rt  
gravin'—doesn't tha see  
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was  
sweet upo' me ?

## II

Nay to be sewer it be past 'er time  
Whut maakes 'er sa laate ?  
Gor to the larnie at the brack, an' loook  
thruf Maddison's gaate !

## III

Sweet arts ! Molly belike may 'a lighted  
to night upo' one  
Sweet-arts ! thanks to the Lord that I  
niver not listen'd to noan !  
So I sits i' my oan armchair wi' my oan  
kettle theere o' the hob,  
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
second, an' Steevie an' Rob

## IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee Thou  
sees that i' spite o' the men  
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
'oonderd a-year to mysen,  
Yis ! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony  
lass i' the Shere,  
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby  
I seed thruf ya theere

## V

Feyther 'ud saay I wur ugly es sin, an' I  
beant not vaain,  
But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw  
soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaain,  
An' I wasn't so plaun i' pink ribbons, ye  
said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beant  
sich a fool as ye thinks,  
Ye was stroakin ma down wi' the 'air, as  
I be a stroakin o' you,  
But whiniver I loooked i' the glass I wur  
sewer that it couldn't be true,  
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye know'd it  
wur pleasant to 'ear,  
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but  
my two 'oonderd a-year

## VI

D'ya mind the murmur when we was a-  
walkin' together, an' stood  
By the cläy-d-oop pond, that the foalk  
be sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,  
Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen,  
black Sal, es 'ed been disgraced?  
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a  
creepin about my waaist,  
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's  
gittin' ower fond,  
I sidled awaay an' awaay till I plumpt foot  
fust i' the pond,  
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well,  
as I did that daay,  
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt  
my feet wi' a flop fro' the cläy  
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy  
taail, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam  
an' wur niver sa nigh saayin' 'Yis.  
But wa boath was i' sich a clat we was  
shaamed to cross Gigglesby Greean,  
Fur a cat may look at a king thou knaws  
but the cat mun be clean  
Sa we boath on us kep out o' sight o' the  
winders o' Gigglesby Hinn—  
Naay, but the claws o' tha ' quiet ' they  
pricks clean thruf to the skin—  
An' wa boath slinkt 'oam by the brokken  
shed i' the laane at the back,  
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an'  
thou runn'd oop o' the thack,  
An' tha squeedgd my 'and i' the shed,  
fur there we was forced to 'ide,  
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and  
one o' the Tommies beside.

## VII

Theere now, what art'a mewin at, Steevie?  
for owt I can tell—  
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt  
'a liked tha as well.

## VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while  
I wur chaangin' my gown,  
An' I thowt shall ' chaange my staate?  
but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down—

My bran new carpet es fresh es a mudder  
o' flowers i' Maay—  
Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur  
clatted all ower wi' cläy  
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed  
that it couldn't be,  
An' Robby I gied tha a raatin that sattled  
thi coortin o' me.  
An' Molly, an' me was agreed, as we was  
a-cleanin' the floor,  
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble  
an' plague wi' indoor  
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to  
tha moor n'r the rest,  
But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I  
knaws it be all fur the best.

## IX.

Naay—let ma stroäk tha down till I  
maakes tha es smooth es silk,  
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd  
not 'a been worth thy milk,  
Thou'd niver 'a catch'd ony mice but 'a  
left me the work to do,  
And 'a taen to the bottle beside, so es  
all that I 'ears be true,  
But I loovs tha to maake thysen 'appy,  
an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,  
Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ira awaay fro'  
my oan two 'oonderd 7-year

## X.

Swearn agean, you Toms, as ye used to  
do twelve year sin'!  
Ye niver 'eard Steevie swear 'cep' it wur  
at a dog coomin' in,  
An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus  
a-shawin' your claws,  
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—  
an' one o' ye dead ye knaws!  
Coom gie hoaver then, weant ye? I  
warrant ye soom fine daay—  
Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie one  
or tother awaay  
Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye  
shant hev a drop fro' the paaill.  
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf  
to the tip o' the taail.

## XI.

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt thi? let  
 Steevie coom oop o' my knee  
 Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been  
 the Steevie fur me!  
 Robby wur fast to be sewer, 'e wur burn  
 an' bred i' the 'ouse,  
 But thou be es 'ansom ɹ tabby es iver  
 patted a mouse

## XII

An' I beant not vaan, but I knaws I 'ed  
 led tha a quieter life  
 Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A  
 faathful ɹn' loovin' wife!"  
 An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy  
 windmill oop o' the croft,  
 Tha thouwt tha would marry ma, did tha?  
 but that wur a bit ower soft,  
 Thaw thou was es soaber es daay, wi' a  
 niced red frace, ɹn' es clean  
 Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran  
 new 'ead o' the Queean,  
 An' thy farmin' es clean es thysen', fur,  
 Steevie, tha kep' it sa neat  
 That I niver not spied sa much es ɹ  
 poppy along wi' the wheat,  
 An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an'  
 seeadin' thi haated to see,  
 'Twur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i' my  
 orn blue chaumber to me  
 Ay, roob thy whiskers agean ma, fur I  
 could 'a taaen to tha well,  
 But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a  
 bouncin' boy an' a gell

## XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I  
 be mysen o' my cats,  
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I  
 hevn't naw likin' fur brats,  
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,  
 an' they goas fur a walk,  
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'  
 doesn't not 'nder the talk!  
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky  
 bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

An' their mashin' their toys to pieaces  
 an' maakin' ma deaf wi' their  
 shouts,  
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they  
 was set upo' springs,  
 An' a haan' ma hawkard questions, an'  
 saayin' ondecnt things,  
 An' ɹ-callin' mɹ 'hugly' mayhap to my  
 faace, or a tearin' my gown—  
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
 Tommies—Steevie git down

## XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you  
 I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
 Tom, lig theere o' the cushion, an' tother  
 Tom 'ere o' the mat

## XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them!* Hed I  
 married the Tommies—O Lord,  
 To loove an' obaay the Tommies! I  
 couldn't 'a stuck by my word  
 To be horder'd about, an' waaked, when  
 Molly 'd put out the light,  
 By a man coomin' in wi' ɹ hiccup at ony  
 hour o' the night!  
 An' the taable staan'd wi' 'is aale, an' the  
 mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,  
 an' the mark o' 'is 'ead o' the  
 chairs!  
 An' noan o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let  
 me 'a hed my oan waay,  
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taails when they  
 'evn't a word to saay

## XVI

An' I sits i' my oan little parlour, an'  
 sarved by my oan little lass,  
 Wi' my oan little garden outside, an' my  
 oan bed o' sparrow grass,  
 An' my oan door-poorch wi' the wood  
 bine an' jessmine a dressin' it  
 greean,  
 An' my oan fine Jackman i' purple a  
 roabin' the 'ouse like a Queean.

## XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es  
 I be abroad i' the laanes,  
 When I goas fur to coomfut the poor es  
 be down wi' their haaches an'  
 their paains  
 An' a haaf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meat  
 when it beant too dear,  
 They maakes ma a graater Laady nor 'er  
 i' the mansion theer,  
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much  
 to spare or to spend,  
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soa  
 please God, to the hend

## XVIII

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! 'wha  
 ha maade our Molly sa laate?  
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theer  
 —it be strikn' height—  
 'Cushie wur craazed fur 'er cauf' well—  
 'eard 'er a maakin' 'er moan,  
 An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that  
 hevn't naw cauf o' my oan'  
 Theree'  
 Set it down!  
 Now Robby!  
 You Tommies shall wait to nigh  
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their la  
 —an' it sarves ye right



## LOCKSLEY HALL

## SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,  
 Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,  
 I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine,  
 And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past,  
 Babble, babble, our old England may go down in babble at last

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?  
 Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise,  
 I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—  
 Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown,  
 I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?  
 You, not you! your modern amourest is of easier, earthlier make

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child,  
 But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,  
 She that finds a winter sun at faster than a morn of Spring

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefest lease of life,  
 While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would be widow wife

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,  
 E'en the homely friar can teach us there is something in descent

Yonder in that chapel slowly sinking now into the ground,  
 Lies the warrior, my father, with his feet upon the hound

Created for once he said to see to crush the Moslem in his pride,  
 Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,  
 Gazing for one precious moment on that founder of our blood

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,  
 Close beneath the crimson and the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,  
 Lies my Amy dead in child bed, dead the mother, dead the child

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—  
 I this old white-headed dreamer stooped and kiss'd her marble brow

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, fumes, curses, passionate tears,  
 Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away  
 Cold upon the dead no more sleeps the gleam of dying day

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,  
 All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
 Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,  
 She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly sweet,  
 Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,  
 She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind

Here to-day as Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,  
 Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea,  
 Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.



Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night,  
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just—  
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom,  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate

From the golden alms of Blessing man had com'd himself a curse  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaken the light with blood

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—  
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?  
 'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive  
 Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,  
 Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?  
 Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers  
 Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?  
 Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,  
 Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise  
 When was age so crumpled with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,  
 Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born'

Equal-born? O yes if yonder hill be level with the flat  
 Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom  
 Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?  
 Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
 Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,  
 Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,  
 Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;  
 So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;  
 Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game,  
 Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;  
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tongues'ers we may fall

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'  
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place,  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the futh, without the hope,  
Breal the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Print the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare,  
Down with Recticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer,  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—  
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abyssm

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;  
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old world dust before the newer world begin

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—  
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dolage ere the dotard fall asleep?  
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray  
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind,  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a world a world a single race a single tongue—  
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every fiercer madness muffled, every serpent passion kill'd,  
Every gun an axe a plough, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles

Waste of a lion her tent are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—  
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die or live then Will it ever? late or soon?  
Can it, till this outer earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her On this day and at this hour,  
In the gap between the cardinals, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—  
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—  
Here we stood and clasp'd each other, swore the seeming deathless vow

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hell, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass

Venus, near her smiling downward at this earthier earth of ours,  
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things  
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendour or in Mars,  
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,  
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in planning heavenward on a star so silver fair,  
Vearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward in the immeasurable sea,  
Staid by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me

All the suns—are there but symbols of innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pun in every peopled sphere?  
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song,  
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,  
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of land—  
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of sand

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul,  
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.  
Not to night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so late

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night,  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to night, my grandson ! Death and Silence hold their own  
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain  
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the ' Lion passant ' from his field

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old political common sense !

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled !  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years

\* \* \* \* \*

In this Hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—  
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—  
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell !  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, ' I have loved thee well '

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him ? who shall swear it cannot be ?  
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,



Thousands of horsemen had gather'd  
 there on the height,  
 With a wing push'd out to the left and  
 a wing to the right,  
 And who shall escape if they close? but  
 he dash'd up alone  
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
 Swar'd his sabre, and held his own  
 Like an Englishman there and then,  
 All in a moment follow'd with force  
 Three that were next in their fiery  
 course,  
 Wedged themselves in between horse  
 and horse,  
 Fought for their lives in the narrow gap  
 they had made—  
 Four amid thousands' and up the hill,  
 up the hill,  
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the  
 Heavy Brigade

## III

Fell like a cannonshot,  
 Burst like a thunderbolt,  
 Crash'd like a hurricane,  
 Broke thro' the mass from below,  
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
 Whirling their sabres in circles of light'  
 And some of us, all in amaze,  
 Who were held for a while from the  
 fight,  
 And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the  
 right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud,—  
 O mad for the charge and the battle  
 were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank from  
 sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray  
 sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering,  
 all dismay'd,  
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
 Scarlett's Brigade!'

## IV

'Lost one and all' were the words  
 Mutter'd in our dismay;  
 But they rode like Victors and Lords  
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
 They rode, or they stood at bay—  
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
 Down with the bridle-hand drew  
 The foe from the saddle and threw  
 Underfoot there in the fry—  
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
 In the wave of a stormy day,  
 Till suddenly shock upon shock  
 Stagger'd the mass from without,  
 Drove it in wild disarray,  
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer and  
 a shout,  
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and  
 reel'd  
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out  
 of the field,  
 And over the brow and away

## V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge  
 that they made!  
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
 the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2nd squadron of Inniskillings, the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him

## EPILOGUE

IRENE.

NOT this way will you set your name  
 A star among the stars

POET.

What way?





Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's  
pyre,

## II

Landscape lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the Works  
and Days,  
All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a golden  
phrase;

## III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse  
and herd;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
often flowering in a lonely word,

## IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
piping underneath his beechen  
bowers;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
whom the laughing shepherd  
bound with flowers,

## V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
unlabourous earth and oarless sea,

## VI.

Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal  
Mind;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human  
kind,

## VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;  
star that gildest yet this phantom  
shore;  
Golden branch amid the shadows,  
kings and realms that pass to rise  
no more;

## VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
fallen every purple Cæsar's  
dome—  
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
sound for ever of Imperial  
Rome—

## IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
and the Rome of freemen holds  
her place,  
I, from out the Northern Island  
sunder'd once from all the human  
race,

## X

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
I that loved thee since my day  
began,  
Wielder of the stateliest measure  
ever moulded by the lips of man

## THE DEAD PROPHET

182—

## I.

DEAD!  
And the Muses cried with a stormy cry  
'Send them no more, for evermore  
Let the people die'

## II

Dead!  
'Is it *he* then brought so low?'  
And a careless people flock'd from the  
fields  
With a purse to pay for the show

## III

Dead, who had served his time,  
Was one of the people's kings,  
Had labour'd in lifting them out of slime,  
And showing them, souls have wings'

## IV.

Dumb on the winter heath he lay  
His friends had stript him bare,  
And roll'd his nakedness everyway  
That all the crowd might stare

## V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
On its barkless bones, stood stark by the  
dead;  
And behind him, low in the West,

## VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,  
And blurr'd in colour and form,  
The sun hung over the gates of Night,  
And glared at a coming storm

## VII

Then glided a vulturous Beldam forth,  
That on dumb death had thriven,  
They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon  
earth,  
And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in  
Heaven

## VIII

She knelt—'We worship him'—all but  
wept—  
'So great so noble was he!'  
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept  
The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX.

'Great! for he spoke and the people  
heard,  
And his eloquence caught like a flame  
From zone to zone of the world, till his  
Word  
Had won him a noble name

## X.

Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound ran  
Thro' palace and cottage door,  
For he touch'd on the whole sad planet  
of man,  
The kings and the rich and the poor,

## XI

And he sung not alone of an old sun se  
But a sun coming up in his youth!  
Great and noble—O yes—but yet—  
For man is a lover of Truth,

## XII

And bound to follow, wherever she go  
Stark-naked, and up or down,  
Thro' her high hill-passes of stamles  
snow,  
Or the foulest sewer of the town—

## XIII

Noble and great—O ay—but then,  
Tho' a prophet should have his due,  
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men  
Shall we see to it, I and you?

## XIV.

For since he would sit on a Prophet  
seat,  
As a lord of the Human soul,  
We needs must scan him from head t  
feet  
Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

## XV

His wife and his child stood by him :  
tears,  
But she—she push'd them aside  
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand  
years,  
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

## XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway  
still,  
Had often truckled and cower'd  
When he rose in his wrath, and ha  
yielded her will  
To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about  
'Small blemish upon the skin!  
But I think we know what is fair without  
Is often as foul within.'

## XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from part,  
 And out of his body she drew  
 The red 'Blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and  
 heart  
 She held them up to the view;

## XIX.

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
 And all the people were pleased;  
 'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
 'And the liver is half-diseased'

## XX.

She tore the Prophet after death,  
 And the people paid her well  
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath,  
 One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell'

## EARLY SPRING

## I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And domes the red-plow'd hills  
 With loving blue,  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The throistles too

## II

Opens a door in Heaven;  
 From skies of glass  
 A Jacob's ladder falls  
 On greening grass,  
 And o'er the mountain-walls  
 Young angels pass.

## III

Before them fleets the shower,  
 And burst the buds,  
 And shine the level lands,  
 And flash the floods;  
 The stars are from their hands  
 Flung thro' the woods,

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc., when torn by the conqueror out of the body of the conquered.

## IV

The woods with living airs  
 How softly fann'd,  
 Light airs from where the deep,  
 All down the sand,  
 Is breathing in his sleep,  
 Heard by the land

## V

O follow, leaping blood,  
 The season's lure!  
 O heart, look down and up  
 Serene, secure,  
 Warm as the crocus cup,  
 Like snowdrops, pure!

## VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade  
 Thro' some slight spell,  
 A gleam from yonder vale,  
 Some far blue fell,  
 And sympathies, how frail,  
 In sound and smell!

## VII

Till at thy chuckled note,  
 Thou twinkling bird,  
 The fairy fancies range,  
 And, lightly stir'd,  
 Ring little bells of change  
 From word to word

## VIII

For now the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And thaws the cold, and fills  
 The flower with dew,  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The poets too

# PREFATORY POEM TO MY BROTHER'S SONNETS.

*Midnight, June 30, 1879*

## I

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune  
 The breakers lash the shores

The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

## II

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark.

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet surely to be found  
When Truth is found again

## III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,  
As all my hopes were thine—  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine!

## 'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row!

So they row'd, and there we landed—'O  
venusta Sirmio!'

There to me thro' all the groves of olive  
in the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the  
purple flowers grow,

Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's  
hopeless woe,

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-  
hundred years ago,

'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander  
to and fro

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
Garda Lake below

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive  
silvery Sirmio!

HELEN'S TOWER<sup>1</sup>

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land  
Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love in letter'd gold  
Love is in and out of time,  
I am mortal stone and lime  
Would my granite girth were strong  
As ether love, to last as long!  
I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT-  
FORD DE REDCLIFFE

## IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand among  
our best

And noblest, now thy long day's work  
hath ceased,

Here silent in our Minster of the West  
Who wert the voice of England in the  
East

EPITAPH  
ON GENERAL GORDONIN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL HOF NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
tyrant's foe,

Now somewhere dead far in the waste  
Soudan,

Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know  
This earth has never borne a nobler  
man.

<sup>1</sup> Written at the request of my friend, Lord  
Dufferin



## III

For thou—when Athens reign'd and  
Rome,  
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
pain  
To mark in many a freeman's home  
The slave, the scourge, the chain,

## IV

O follower of the Vision, still  
In motion to the distant gleam,  
Howe'er blind force and brainless will  
May jar thy golden dream

## V

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
Of civic Hate no more to be,  
Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
Till every Soul be free,

## VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast  
This order of Her Human Star,  
This heritage of the past,

## VII

O scorner of the party cry  
That wanders from the public good,  
Thou—when the nations rear on high  
Their idol smear'd with blood,

## VIII

And when they roll their idol down—  
Of saner worship sanely proud,  
Thou loather of the lawless crown  
As of the lawless crowd,

## IX.

How long thine ever-growing mind  
Hath still'd the blast and strown the  
wave,  
Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
To sing thee to thy grave,

## X

Men loud against all forms of power—  
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
tongues—  
Expecting all things in an hour—  
Brass mouths and iron lungs!

TO H R H PRINCESS  
BEATRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of human  
life,  
Which else with all its pains, and griefs,  
and deaths,  
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of  
dawn  
That brightens thro' the Mother's tender  
eyes,  
And warms the child's awakening world  
—and one  
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit draws  
the child  
To move in other spheres The Mother  
weeps  
At that white funeral of the single life,  
Her maiden daughter's marriage, and  
her tears  
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the  
child  
Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her*! but Thou,  
True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial  
eyes  
Have seen the loneliness of earthly thrones,  
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown  
nor let  
This later light of Love have risen in vain,  
But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between  
The two that love thee, lead a summer  
life,  
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
each Love,  
Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven  
Between two Suns, and drawing down  
from both  
The light and genial warmth of doubled day

THE FLEET.<sup>1</sup>

I.

You, you, if you shall fail to under-  
stand

What England is, and what her all in-  
all,

On you will come the curse of all the  
land,

Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly, from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realised how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November 1886*

I

II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on  
earth,

Our own fur isle, the lord of every sea—  
Her fuller franchise—what would that be  
worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—  
Were she a fallen state?

III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so  
small,

Her island-myriads fed from alien  
lands—

The fleet of England is her all-in-all,  
Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her Fate

IV

You, you, that have the ordering of her  
fleet,

If you should only compass her dis-  
grace,

When all men starve, the wild mob's  
million feet

Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late

## OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBI- TION BY THE QUEEN

*Written at the Request of the Prince  
of Wales*

I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!  
In your welfare we rejoice,  
Sons and brothers that have sent,  
From isle and cape and continent,  
Produce of your field and flood,  
Mount and mine, and primal wood,  
Works of subtle brain and hand,  
And splendours of the morning land,  
Gifts from every British zone,  
Britons, hold your own!

2 P



## II

May we find, as ages run,  
The mother sutured in the son,  
And may yours for ever be  
That old strength and constancy  
Which has made your fathers great  
In our ancient island State,  
And wherever her flag fly,  
Glorying between sea and sky,  
Makes the might of Britain known,  
Britons, hold your own!

## III

Britain fought her sons of yore—  
Britain sul'd, and never more,  
Careless of our growing kin,  
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
Men that in a narrower day—  
Unprophetic rulers they—  
Drove from out the mother's nest  
That young eagle of the West  
To forage for herself alone,  
Britons, hold your own!

## IV

Shrivers of our glorious past,  
Brothers, must we part at last?  
Shall we not thro' good and ill  
Cleave to one another still?  
Britain's myriad voices call,  
'Sons, be welded each and all,  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain, heart and soul!  
One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!  
Britons, hold your own!

## POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,  
Old Virgil who would write ten lines,  
they say,  
At dawn, and lavish all the golden day  
To make them wealthier in his readers' eyes,

And you, old popular Horace, you the  
wiser  
Adviser of the nine years ponder'd lay,  
And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter  
bays,

Catullus, whose dead songster never dies  
If, glancing downward on the kindly  
sphere

That once had roll'd you round and  
round the Sun,

You see your Art still shined in  
human shelves,

You should be jubilant that you flourish  
here

Before the Love of Letters, overdone,  
Had swamped the sacred poets with  
themselves

## TO W C MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to night we  
part,

Ill-banded thunders often have  
confessed

Thy power, well used to move the  
public breast

We thank thee with our voice, and from  
the heart

Farewell, Macready, since this night we  
part,

Go, take thine honours home, rank  
with the best,

Garrick and stroller Kemble, and  
the rest

Who made a nation purer through their  
art

Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
Nor sicken down to brainless panto  
mime,

And those gilt gruds men-children  
swarm to see

Farewell, Macready, moral, grave, sub  
lime,

Our Shakspeare's bland and universal  
eye

Dwells pleased, through twice a  
hundred years, on thee

# DEMETER

## AND OTHER POEMS

### TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

#### I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and rash,  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

#### II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

#### III

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove'

#### IV

But since your name will grow with Time,  
Not all, as honouring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the name  
A golden portal to my rhyme.

#### V

But more, that you and yours may know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe

#### VI

For he—your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you—  
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

#### VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening year,

Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side path, from simple truth,

#### VIII

Who might have chased and claspt  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here—and there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down,

#### IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more,

#### X.

And sacred is the latest word,  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

#### XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell,  
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

#### XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine! and I may meet him soon,

#### XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN  
VICTORIA.

## I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and  
faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the  
sceptre

## II

She beloved for a kindness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee

## III

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly

## IV

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fur Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee

## V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queen-  
hood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest !

## VI

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,

Make their neighbourhood health  
fuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,  
Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this gl'd Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty sum-  
mers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

## VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Rise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee

## IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Con-  
merce !  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science !  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire !

## X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing ' Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee !'

## XI

Are there thunders moaning in the di-  
tance ?

Are there spectres moving in the darkness?  
 That the Hand of Light will lend her  
 people,  
 Till the thunders pass, the spectres  
 vanish,  
 And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
 Dances into the jubilee of the Age

TO PROFESSOR JERB,  
 WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are done to fade away,  
 Dear witness you, that yesterday  
 From out the bosom of Paradise in  
 you  
 Rollo'd an Olympian, and they say<sup>2</sup>  
 That here the torrid mummy whet  
 Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
 As that which gilds the glebe of  
 England,  
 Sunn'd in a summer of milder heat  
 So may this legend for awhile,  
 If greeted by your classic smile,  
 Thrive dead in its Thracian Enn,<sup>1</sup>  
 Blossom again on a colderisle

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that  
 flies  
 All right across the darkness, and it  
 dawn  
 Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
 And can no more, thou earnest, O my  
 child,  
 Led upward by the God of ghosts and  
 dreams,  
 Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and  
 dumb

<sup>1</sup> In Holo, or

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful

With passing thro' at once from state to  
 state,  
 Until I brought thee hither, that the  
 day,  
 When here thy hands let fall the gather'd  
 flower,  
 Might break thro' clouded memories  
 once again  
 On thy lost self a sudden nightingale  
 Saw thee, and flush'd into a frolic of  
 song  
 And welcome, and a gleam as of the  
 moon,  
 When first she peers along the tremulous  
 deep,  
 Thid wavering o'er thy face, and chased  
 away  
 That shadow of a lileness to the king  
 Of shadows, thy dark mate Persephone!  
 Queen of the dead no more—my child!  
 Thine eyes  
 Again were human godlike, and the Sun  
 Hurst from a swimming fleece of winter  
 gray,  
 And robed thee in his day from head to  
 feet—  
 'Mother' and I was folded in thine  
 arms.

Child, those imperial, dispassion'd  
 eyes  
 Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes  
 That oft had seen the serpent-wand  
 power  
 Draw downward into Hades with his  
 drift  
 Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
 By the red rice of fiery Phlegethon,  
 But when before have Gods or men be-  
 held  
 The Life that had descended re-arise,  
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?  
 So mighty was the mother's childless cry,  
 A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and  
 Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
 The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
 With flowers that brighten as thy foot-  
 step falls,

All flowers—but for one black blur of  
earth  
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which  
the car  
Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee  
hence  
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine  
arms,  
I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
Should yawn once more into the gulf,  
and thence  
The shrilly whinnys of the team of  
Hell,  
Ascending, pierce the glad and songful  
air,  
And all at once their arch'd necks, mid  
night-maned,  
Jet upward thro' the mid day blossom  
No!  
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it, all the  
space  
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself  
afresh,  
And breaks into the crocus purple hour  
That saw thee vanish

Child, when thou wert gone,  
I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
Yea, the cubb'd lioness, went in search  
of thee  
Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and  
gave  
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
And set the mother waking in amaze  
To find her sick one whole, and forth  
again  
Among the wail of midnight winds, and  
cried,  
'Where is my loved one? Wherefore  
do ye wail?'  
And out from all the night an answer  
shrill'd,  
'We know not, and we know not why we  
wail'  
I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
And ask'd the waves that moan about  
the world  
'Where? do ye make your moaning for  
my child?'

And round from all the world the voices  
came  
'We know not, and we know not why  
we moan'  
'Where?' and I stared from every eagle  
peak,  
I thridded the black heart of all the  
woods,  
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the  
storms  
Of Autumn swept across the city, and  
heard  
The murmur of their temples chanting  
me,  
Me, me, the desolate Mother! 'Where?'  
—and turn'd,  
And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
man,  
And grieved for man thro' all my grief  
for thee,—  
The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
The scorpion crawling over naked  
skulls,—  
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
Spring from his fallen God, but trace of  
thee  
I saw not, and far on, and, following out  
A league of labyrinthine darkness, came  
On three gray heads beneath a gleaming  
rift  
'Where?' and I heard one voice from  
all the three  
'We know not, for we spin the lives of  
men,  
And not of Gods, and know not why we  
spin!  
There is a Fate beyond us' Nothing  
knew

Last as the likeness of a dying man,  
Without his knowledge, from him flits to  
warn  
A far-off friendship that he comes no  
more,  
So he, the God of dreams, who heard  
my cry,  
Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow  
past

Ifore me, crying 'The Bright' one in  
the highest  
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest  
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I,  
the child  
Of fate, the great Earth Mother, thee,  
the Power  
That lifts her baneful life from gloom to  
Honor,  
Should be for ever and ever more  
The Brute of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd  
Then I, Earth Goddess, cursed the Gods  
of Heaven  
I would not mingle with their feasts, to  
me  
Their recter smack'd of hemlock on the  
lips,  
Their rich and roasting tasted soon to  
The man, that only lives and loves an  
hour,  
Seem'd nobler than their hard eternities  
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
rings burn'd  
The hard, and lost in utter grief I fail'd  
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine  
And golden grain, my gift to helpless  
man  
Rain rotten died the wheat, the barley-  
spears  
Were hollow husk'd, the leaf fell, and  
the sun,  
Pale at my grief, drew down before his  
time  
Sickening and Autumn kept her winter  
snow  
Then He, the brother of this Darkness,  
He  
Who still is highest, glancing from his  
height  
On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
miss'd  
The venter'd stem of sacrifice, the praise  
And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
shouldst dwell  
For nine white moons of each whole year  
with me,  
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy  
king

Once more the reaper in the gleam of  
dawn  
Will see me by the landmark far away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk  
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.  
Yet I, Earth Goddess, am but ill  
content  
With them, who still are highest Those  
gray heads,  
What meant they by their 'Fate beyond  
the Fates'  
But younger kinder Gods to bear us  
down,  
As we bore down the Gods before us  
Gods,  
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to  
stay,  
Not spread the plague, the famine, Gods  
indeed,  
To send the noon into the night and  
dark  
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,  
And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright  
year with me,  
And souls of men, who grew beyond  
their race,  
And made themselves as Gods against  
the fear  
Of Death and Hell, and thou that hast  
from men,  
As Queen of Death, that worship which  
is Fear,  
Henceforth, as having risen from out the  
dead,  
Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
From buried grain thro' springing blade,  
and bless  
Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,  
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of  
Earth  
The worship which is Love, and see no  
more  
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly  
glimmering lawns  
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide  
Along the silent field of Asphodel

OWD ROA<sup>1</sup>

NAAy, noa mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin'  
'im Roa, Roa, Roa,

Fur the dog's stoan deaf, an' e's blind, 'e  
can naither stan' nor goa

But I meins fur to marke 'is owd aige  
as 'appy as iver I can,

Fur I owas owd Roaver moor nor I iver  
owid mottal man

Thou's rode of 'is bick when a babby,  
asoor thou was gotten too owd,

Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was  
allus as good as gowd

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e  
fowt, 'e could howd<sup>3</sup> 'is oan,

An' Roa was the dog as know'd when  
an' where to bury his boane

An' 'e kep his head hoop like a king, an'  
'e'd niver not down wi' 'is trail,

Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shammed  
on, when we was i' Howlaby  
Daale

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,  
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be  
dead,

I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort  
of a sarvice read

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parli-  
ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,  
An' I'd vot fur 'im, my oan sen, if 'e  
could but stan fur the Shere

'Faathful an' True'—them words be i'  
Scriptur—an' Faathful an' True  
Ull be fun<sup>4</sup> upo' four short legs ten times  
fur one upo' two

An' marybe they'll walk upo' two but I  
knows they runs upo' four,<sup>5</sup>—  
Bedtime, Dicky! but wait till tha 'ears  
it be strikin' the hour

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover<sup>2</sup> Manner<sup>3</sup> Hold<sup>4</sup> Found<sup>5</sup> 'Ou as in 'house'

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roa when we  
lived i' Howlaby Daale,  
Ten year sin—Nray—nray! tha mun  
nobbut hev' one glass of aale

Strange an' owd-farran'd<sup>1</sup> the 'ouse, an'  
belt<sup>2</sup> long asoor my dary

Wi' haase o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>3</sup>  
an' twined like a band o' hray

The fellers as makes them picturs, 'ud  
coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo stools to pictur  
the door-poorch theree,

An' the Hergle 'as hed two heads stannin'  
theree o' the brokken stick,<sup>4</sup>

An' they niver 'ed seed sich niver<sup>5</sup> as  
graw'd hall over the brick,

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night—but it's  
down, an' all on it now

Gorn into mangles an' tonups,<sup>6</sup> an  
raaved slick thruf by the plow—

Theree, when the 'ouse wur a house, one  
night I wur sittin' aloan,

Wi' Rover athurt my feet, an' sleeapin  
still as a storn,

Of a Christmas Eve, an' as coud as  
this, an' the midders<sup>7</sup> as white,

An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop  
wi' the windle<sup>8</sup> that night,

An' the cat wur a-sleeapin alongside  
Rover, but I wur awake,

An' smoakin' an' thinkin' o' things—  
Doant maake thyssen sick wi' the  
caake

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,

An' 'ed goan their waays; ther was  
nobbut three, an' noan on 'em  
theree

<sup>1</sup> 'Owd farran'd,' old fashioned<sup>2</sup> Built<sup>3</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted<sup>4</sup> On a stiff raguld<sup>5</sup> Ivy<sup>6</sup> Mangolds and turnips<sup>7</sup> Meadows<sup>8</sup> Drifted snow

Tay was all o' 'er a fear'd o' the Ghos'  
an' d'ic'rt' ret'leap' i' the 'ouse  
Fat Dick, the Ghos't r' a thins'<sup>2</sup> was  
nobb't a rat o' a mouse

An' I lookt out worst' a the nigh,  
an' the d'ale was all o' a di w,  
Fur I seed the beek coom'n' d'ay n' like  
a long black snake i' the r'ay,

An' I heard p'nt' heap' o' the snaw  
shut a' d'own f' the bank to  
the beek,  
An' then as I stood i' the doorway, I  
seed it a'p' o' my reef

Saw I turn'd in 'ere i, an' I thowt o'  
the good o'ld times 'at was goun  
An' the munny they made by the r'r,  
an' the times 'at was coom'n' on,

Fur I thowt i' the State was a g'win'  
to let in furrin' w'at,  
Hoover was British farmers to stan'  
agean o' their fleet

Hoover was I fur to find my rent an'  
to pay my men?  
An' all along o' the feller<sup>3</sup> as turn'd 'is  
beck o' hissen.

Thou sleep i' the chamber above us, we  
could it ha' 'eard the call,  
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring the  
down, an' thy cradle an' all,

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at sleep w' the  
thin' ed gotten ver l'ave,  
Fur to go that night to 'er f'oll by cause  
o' the Christmas Lave,

But I clein forgot tha, my lad, when  
Moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I sleep i' my chair hup on end, an' the  
I reea I r'ide runn'd i' my 'ad,

Till I dream'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I  
says to him 'Squire, y'r'e late,'  
Then I seed at 'is face wur as red as the  
Yule block ther i' the grate

An' 'e says 'can y'r pay me the rent to  
night?' an' I says to 'im 'Noa,'  
An' 'e catch'd howd hard o' my harm,<sup>1</sup>  
'Then hout to night the shall goa'

'Tha'll never,' says I, 'be a turnin' ma  
hoat upo' Christmas Lave?'  
Then I wak'd an' I fun it was Roaver  
a tuggin' an' tearin' my sheave

An' I thowt as 'e'd goun clein wud,<sup>2</sup> fur  
I noways know'd 'is intent,  
An' I says 'Git away, y'r beast,' an' I  
feicht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eard  
'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,  
An' I'd clein forgot, little Dicky, thy  
chamber door wouldn't sneek,<sup>3</sup>

An' I sleep i' my chair agean w' my harm  
hugin' down to the floor,  
An' I thowt it was Roaver a tuggin' an  
tearin' me wuss nor 'foor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im agean, but I  
kick'd thy Moother isterd  
'What r'ia snorin' theree fur? the house  
is 'tire,' she said

Thy Moother 'ed bein a naggin' about  
the gell o' the farm,  
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when  
there warn't not a mossel o' harm,

An' she didn't not solidly mean I wur  
g'win' that w'ay to the bad,  
Fur the gell<sup>4</sup> was as howry a trollope  
as ver trapes'd i' the squad

But Moother was free o' 'er tongue, as I  
offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she  
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then

An' I says 'T'd be good to tha, Bess, if  
tha'd onywaays let ma be good,'

1 Arm                      2 Mad                      3 Latch  
4 The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged  
in the mud, but there is a sense of sluttishness  
in 'trapes d' which is not expressed in 'trudged'

1 'Mothins,' for the most part, generally  
2 Once                      3 Peel



But she skelpt m<sup>r</sup> haife ower i' the chur,  
an' screed like a Howl gone  
wud<sup>1</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether<sup>2</sup> Git oop,  
if y<sup>r</sup>e onyways gool for owt'  
And I says 'If I beint noways— not  
nowadays—good fur nowt—

Yit I beant sich a Nowt<sup>3</sup> of all Nowts  
as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid'  
'But the stairs is afire,' she sud; then I  
seed 'er a cryin', I did

An' she beid 'Ya mun r<sup>r</sup>ve little Dick,  
an' be sharp about it an' all,'  
So I runs to the y<sup>r</sup>d fur a lether, an'  
sets 'im ag<sup>n</sup> the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder  
him, when I gits to the top,  
But the heat druv hout i' my heyes till I  
feild my<sup>n</sup> ready to drop

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an'  
tellin' me not to be sk<sup>r</sup>ra,  
An' I wasn't afeard, or I thinks I<sup>s</sup>  
waays as I wasn't afeard,

But I couldn't see fur the smoke where  
thou was a luggin, my lad,  
An' Roaver was the<sup>r</sup>e i' the chamber  
a jowlin' an' jaupin' like mad,

An' thou was a beilin' likewise, an' a  
squealin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the  
merk's<sup>4</sup> o' thy shou'd<sup>r</sup>er yit,

Then I call'd out Ro<sup>r</sup>, Ro<sup>r</sup>, Ro<sup>a</sup>, thaw  
I didn't haafe think as 'e'd 'lar,  
*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my barn  
i' 'is mouth to the wi' der there'*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as  
soon as 'e 'e'rd 'is naame,  
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at  
summun seed i' the flaame,

<sup>1</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like an  
owl gone mad

<sup>2</sup> Ladder

<sup>3</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person

<sup>4</sup> Mar!

When summun 'ed har'd fir a son, an  
'e promised a son to she,  
An' Ro<sup>r</sup> was as gool<sup>1</sup> as the Hangel i'  
savin' a son fur me

So I bro' it tha down, an' I says 'I man  
grw up agean fur Ro<sup>a</sup>'  
'Gaw up agein fur the wirm nt?' I  
tell'd 'er 'Yas I mun goa'

An' I clum'b'd ap agein to the winder,  
an' clemm'd<sup>1</sup> owd Ro<sup>r</sup>ly the 'e'nd,  
An' 'is 'ur coom'd o'f i' my 'ands an' I  
taken 'im at fust fur dead,

Fur 'e smell'd like a horse a singen', an'  
'e'cam'd<sup>2</sup> as blind as a poop,  
An' haife on 'im burn as a bublin'<sup>3</sup> I  
couldn't walk on 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the  
barn, fur the barn wouldn't burn  
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waay,  
an' the wind wasn't like to turn

An' I lep a callin' o' Ro<sup>r</sup> till 'e waggl'd  
'is tail fur a bit,  
But the cocks lep a crawin' an' crawin'  
all night, an' I 'e'rs 'em yit,

An' the dogs was a jowlin' all round, and  
thou was a-squealin' thys<sup>r</sup>,  
An' Moother was raggin' an' growmin' an'  
mornin' an' raggin' agean;

An' I 'e'rd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>3</sup>  
rumble down when the roof gev  
waay,

Fur the fire was a raggin' an' ravin' an'  
roarin' like judgment daay

Warm enew the<sup>r</sup>e sewer ly, but the barn  
was as cowl as owt,

An' we cuddled and huddled together, an'  
h<sup>r</sup>ipt<sup>4</sup> wersens oop as we mov'd.

An' I browt Ro<sup>a</sup> round, but Moother 'ed  
bean sa sor'd<sup>1</sup> wi' the thaw  
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw

<sup>1</sup> Clutched

<sup>2</sup> 'Bubbling a young unfledged bird

<sup>3</sup> Beams

<sup>4</sup> Wrapt ourselves

Haaf e o' the parish runn'd oop when the  
 rigtree<sup>1</sup> was tummlin' in—  
 Too laate—but it's all ower now—hall  
 hower—an' ten year sin,

Too laate, tha mun git thr to bed, but  
 I'll coom an' I'll squench the light,  
 Fur we moant 'ev now moor fires—and  
 soa little Dick, good night

<sup>1</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the  
 house just beneath the ridge.

## VASTNESS.

### I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe  
 sighs after many a vanish'd face,  
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll  
 with the dust of a vanish'd race

### II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this  
 poor earth's pale history runs,—  
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in the  
 gleam of a million million of suns?

### III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,  
 truthless violence mourn'd by the  
 Wise,  
 Thousands of voices drowning his own in  
 a popular torrent of lies upon lies,

### IV.

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious  
 annals of army and fleet,  
 Death for the right cause, death for the  
 wrong cause, trumpets of victory,  
 groans of defeat;

### V

Innocence scathed in her mother's milk,  
 and Charity setting the martyr  
 aflame;  
 Thralldom who walks with the banner of  
 Freedom, and recks not to ruin a  
 realm in her name

### VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the  
 gloom of doubts that darken the  
 schools,  
 Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her  
 hand, follow'd up by her vassal  
 legion of fools,

### VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with  
 her spice and her vintage, her silk  
 and her corn,  
 Desolate offing, sailorless harbours,  
 famishing populace, wharves for-  
 lorn,

### VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise,  
 gloom of the evening, Life at a  
 close  
 Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down  
 way with her flying robe and her  
 poison'd rose,

### IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of  
 Pleasure, a worm which writhes  
 all day, and at night  
 Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,  
 and stings him back to the curse  
 of the light,

### X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded  
 harlots, honest Poverty, bare to  
 the bone,  
 Opulent Avance, lean as Poverty,  
 Flattery gilding the rift in a  
 throne,

### XI

Fame blowing out from her golden  
 trumpet a jubilant challenge to  
 Time and to Fate,  
 Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on  
 all the laurel graves of the Great,

## XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with  
marriage, no regrets for aught  
that has been,

Household happiness, gracious children,  
debtless competence, golden mean,

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations,  
and pigmy spites of the village  
spire,

Vows that will last to the last death-  
ruckle, and vows that are snapt  
in a moment of fire,

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the  
minute, and died in the doing it,  
flesh without mind,

He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross,  
till Self died out in the love of  
his kind,

## XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revolu-  
tions of earth,

All new-old revolutions of Empire—  
change of the tide—what is all of  
it worth?

## XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences,  
poesy, varying voices of prayer?

All that is noblest, all that is basest, all  
that is filthy with all that is fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in  
being our own corpse-coffins at  
last,

Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a mean-  
ingless Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the  
gloom, or a moment's anger of  
bees in their hive?—

\*       \*       \*

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and  
love him for ever the dead are  
not dead but alive

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell  
Lowell.

## THE RING

## MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

*Miriam (singing)*

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Globing Honey Moons  
Bright as this

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight

Silver crescent curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey Moon

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new?

*Father.* And who was he with such  
love drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons of  
one?

*Miriam* The prophet of his own, my  
Hubert—his  
The words, and mine the setting 'Air  
and Words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, 'are  
bride  
And bridegroom' Does it please you?

*Father* Munk, child,  
Because I hear your Mother's voice in  
yours  
She——, why, you shiver tho' the wind  
is west  
With all the warmth of summer  
*Miriam* Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a breath  
that past  
With all the cold of winter  
*Father* (utter. to herself) Even  
so  
The Ghost in Man the Ghost that once  
was Man,  
But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the  
veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for  
man,  
But thro' the Wall of One who knows  
and rules—  
And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Eternal Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the Spheres—in ever opening  
height,  
An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link  
With me to-day  
*Miriam* You speak so low, what is it?  
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a new  
link  
Breaking an old one?  
*Father* No for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in all  
*Miriam* And you the lifelong guard-  
ian of the child  
*Father* I and one other whom you  
have not known  
*Miriam* And who? what other?  
*Father* Whither are you bound?  
For Naples which we only left in May?  
*Miriam* No! father, Spain, but  
Hubert brings me home  
With April and the swallow Wish me  
joy!  
*Father* What need to wish when  
Hubert weds in you

The heart of Love, and you the soul of  
Truth  
In Hubert?  
*Miriam* Tho' you used to call me  
once  
The lonely maiden Princess of the wood,  
Who meant to sleep her hundred sum-  
mers out  
Before a kiss should wake her  
*Father* Ay, but now  
Your fairy Prince has found you, take  
this ring  
*Miriam* 'Io t'amo'—and these dia-  
monds—beautiful!  
'From Walter,' and for me from you then?  
*Father* Well,  
One way for Miriam  
*Miriam* Miriam am I not?  
*Father* This ring bequeath'd you by  
your mother, child,  
Was to be given you—such her dying  
wish—  
Given on the morning when you came of  
age  
Or on the day you married Both the  
days  
Now close in one The ring is doubly  
yours  
Why do you look so gravely at the tower?  
*Miriam* I never saw it yet so all  
ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!  
And how the birds that circle round the  
tower  
Are cheeping to each other of their flight  
To summer lands!  
*Father* And that has made you grave?  
Fly—care not Birds and brides must  
leave the nest  
Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own  
*Miriam* It is not that!  
*Father* What else?  
*Miriam* That chamber in the tower  
*Father* What chamber, child?  
Your nurse is here?  
*Miriam* My Mother's nurse and mine  
She comes to dress me in my bridal veil

*Father* What did she say?  
*Miriam* She said, that you and I  
 Had been abroad for my poor health so  
 long  
 She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
 ask'd  
 About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy  
 hair  
 Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine'  
*Father* What then? what more?  
*Miriam* She said—perhaps indeed  
 She wander'd, having wander'd now so  
 far  
 Beyond the common date of death—that  
 you,  
 When I was smaller than the statuette  
 Of my dear Mother on your bracket here—  
 You took me to that chamber in the tower,  
 The topmost—a chest there, by which  
 you knelt—  
 And there were books and dresses—left  
 to me,  
 A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she  
 said,  
 I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used  
 To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my  
 hands  
 As if I saw her, then a woman came  
 And caught me from my nurse I hear  
 her yet—  
 A sound of anger like a distant storm  
*Father* Garrulous old crone  
*Miriam* Poor nurse!  
*Father* I bid her keep,  
 Like a seal'd book, all mention of the  
 ring,  
 For I myself would tell you all to-day  
*Miriam* 'She too might speak to  
 day,' she mumbled. Still,  
 I scarce have learnt the title of your book,  
 But you will turn the pages  
*Father* Ay, to day!  
 I brought you to that chamber on your  
 third  
 September birthday with your nurse, and  
 felt  
 An icy breath play on me, while I stooped  
 To take and kiss the ring  
*Miriam* This very ring  
 Is t'amo?

*Father* Yes, for some wild hope  
 was mine  
 That, in the misery of my married life,  
 Miriam your Mother might appear to me  
 She came to you, not me The storm,  
 you hear  
 Far-off, is Muriel—your stepmother's  
 voice  
*Miriam* Vext, that you thought my  
 Mother came to me?  
 Or at my crying 'Mother?' or to find  
 My Mother's diamonds hidden from her  
 there,  
 Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not  
 shown  
 To dazzle all that see them?  
*Father* Wait a while  
 Your Mother and step-mother—Miriam  
 Erne  
 And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins  
 —lived  
 With Muriel's mother on the down, that  
 sees  
 A thousand squares of corn and meadow,  
 far  
 As the gray deep, a landscape which  
 your eyes  
 Have many a time ranged over when a  
 babe  
*Miriam* I climb'd the hill with  
 Hubert yesterday,  
 And from the thousand squares, one  
 silent voice  
 Came on the wind, and seem'd to say  
 'Again'  
 We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
 Then home, and past the ruin'd mill  
*Father* And there  
 I found these cousins often by the brook,  
 For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw  
 the fly,  
 The girls of equal age, but one was fair,  
 And one was dark, and both were beauti-  
 ful  
 No voice for either spoke within my heart  
 Then, for the surface eye, that only doats  
 On outward beauty, glancing from the one  
 To the other, knew not that which  
 pleased it most,  
 The raven ringlet or the gold, but both

Were dowdless, and myself, I used to  
walk

This Terrace—morbid, melancholy, mine  
And yet not mine the hill, the farm, the  
field

For all that ample woodland whisper'd  
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-  
mur'd 'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
rook

And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage'  
*Miriam* Father's fault  
Visited on the children!

*Father* Ay but then  
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
Rome—

He left me wealth—and while I journey'd  
hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,  
And while I communed with my truest  
self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,  
Till, in the gleam of those mid summer  
dawns,

The form of Miriel faded, and the face  
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew  
And past and future mix'd in Heaven  
and made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day  
*Miriam* So glad? no tear for him,  
who left you wealth,  
Your kinsman?

*Father* I had seen the man but once,  
He loved my name not me, and then I  
pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,  
So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
That he was nearing his own hundred,  
sold

This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the ring  
is weird'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was  
he

'Why weird?' I ask'd him, and he said  
'The souls

Of a repentant Lovers guard the ring,'  
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak  
eyes—

'And if you give the ring to my maid  
They still remember what it cost them  
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the  
ring,

And if the ring were stolen from the  
maid,

The theft were death or madness to the  
thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the  
gift'

And then he told their legend

'Long ago  
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
sent

This ring "Io t'amo" to his best beloved,  
And sent it on her birthday She in  
wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that day  
His death-day, when, half frenzied by the  
ring,

He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The cruser of that scandal, fought and  
fell,

And she that came to part them all too  
late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew the  
ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her  
death,

Shrined him within the temple of her  
heart,

Made every moment of her after life

A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and  
cried

"I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo"

*Miriam* Legend or true? so tender  
should be true'

Did he believe it? did you ask him?

*Father* Ay!  
But that half skeleton, like a barren  
ghost

From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd

A hollow laughter!

*Miriam* Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death! But  
you?

*Father* Well, as the bygone lover  
 thro' this ring  
 Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
 Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the  
 heart  
 Of Miriam, then I had the man en-  
 grave  
 'From Walter' on the ring, and send it  
 —wrote  
 Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but  
 he—  
 Some younger hand must have engraven  
 the ring—  
 His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost  
 Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
 scrib'd  
 A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel',  
 And Muriel clam'd and open'd what I  
 meant  
 For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted  
 it  
 Before that other whom I loved and love  
 A mountain stay'd me here, a minster  
 there,  
 A gallied palace, or a battlefield,  
 Where stood the sheaf of Pease but—  
 coming home—  
 And on your Mother's birthday—all but  
 yours—  
 A week betwixt—and when the tower as  
 now  
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,  
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
 Head-foremost—who were those that  
 stood between  
 The tower and that rich phantom of the  
 tower?  
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and  
 like  
 May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it  
 they?  
 A light shot upward on them from the  
 lake  
 What sparkled there? whose hand was  
 that? they stood  
 So close together I am not keen of  
 sight,  
 But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—  
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring to  
 her?

O Muriel! Miriam reddend, Muriel  
 clench'd  
 The hand that wore it, till I cried again  
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!'  
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was  
 mute  
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be'  
 Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—  
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way  
 And saying gently 'Muriel, by your  
 leave,  
 Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the  
 ring,  
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down her  
 own,  
 'Io t'amo, all is well then' Muriel fled  
*Miriam* Poor Muriel!  
*Father* Ay, poor Muriel  
 when you hear  
 What follows' Miriam loved me from  
 the first,  
 Not thro' the ring, but on her marriage  
 morn  
 This birthday, death day, and betrothal  
 ring,  
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone,  
 And after hours of search and doubt and  
 threats,  
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
 'See!—  
 Found in a chink of that old moulder'd  
 floor!'  
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,  
 As who should say 'that those who lose  
 can find'  
 Then I and she were married for a  
 year,  
 One year without a storm, or even a  
 cloud,  
 And you my Miriam born within the  
 year,  
 And she my Miriam dead within the  
 year  
 I sat beside her dying, and she grasp'd  
 'The books, the miniature, the lace are  
 hers,  
 My ring too when she comes of age, or  
 when  
 She marries, you—you loved me, kept  
 your word.

You love me still "to t'anno"—Muriel  
 —no—  
 She cannot love; she loves her own  
 hard self  
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose Fro  
 nabe me,  
 Minam not Muriel—she shall have the  
 ring  
 And there the light of other life, which  
 lives  
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,  
 Glean'd for a moment in her own on  
 earth  
 I swore the vow, then with my latest  
 kiss  
 Upon them, closed her eyes, which would  
 not close,  
 But kept their watch upon the ring and  
 you  
 Your birthday was her death-day  
 Miriam O poor Mother  
 And you, poor desolate Father, and  
 poor me,  
 The little senseless, worthless, wordless  
 babe,  
 Saved when your life was wreck'd  
 Father Desolate? yes  
 Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm  
 Had parted from his comrade in the  
 boat,  
 And dash'd half dead on barren sands,  
 was I  
 Nay, you were my one solace, only—  
 you  
 Were always ruling Muriel's mother  
 sent,  
 And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came  
 And saw you, shook her head, and patted  
 yours,  
 And smiled, and smiling with a kindly  
 pinch  
 Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—  
 'That should be fix'd,' she said, 'your  
 pretty bud,  
 So blighted here, would flower into full  
 health  
 Among our hearth and bracken Let her  
 come  
 And we will feed her with our mountain  
 air,

And send her home to you rejoicing  
 No—  
 We could not part And once, when  
 you my girl  
 Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist  
 Had grasp'd a daisy from your Mother's  
 grave—  
 By the lych gate was Muriel 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'Among the tombs in this damp vale of  
 yours  
 You scorn my Mother's warning, but the  
 child  
 Is priler than before We often walk  
 In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
 The mist of autumn gather from your  
 lake,  
 And shroud the tower, and once we  
 only saw  
 Your gilded vine, a light above the  
 mist—  
 (Our old bright bird that still is veering  
 there  
 Above his four gold letters) 'and the  
 light,'  
 She said, 'was like that light'—and there  
 she paused,  
 And long, till I believing that the girl's  
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find  
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
 her two—  
 'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
 war—  
 A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
 The pyre he burnt in '—'Nay,' she said,  
 'the light  
 That glimmers on the marsh and on the  
 grave'  
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
 pass'd away  
 Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
 Caught by the flower that closes on the  
 fly,  
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,  
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
 To strike it, struck, I took, I left you  
 there,  
 I came, I went, was happier day by day;  
 For Muriel nursed you with a mother's  
 care,



Till on that clear and heather scented  
height  
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
bloom  
She always came to meet me carrying  
you,  
And all her talk was of the babe she  
loved,  
So, following her old pastime of the brook,  
She threw the fly for me, but oftener left  
That angling to the mother 'Muriel's  
health  
Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam  
Strange!  
She used to shun the wailing babe, and  
dosts  
On this of yours' But when the matron  
saw  
That hinted love was only wasted but,  
Not risen to, she was bolder 'Ever  
since  
You sent the fatal ring'—I told her 'sent  
To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever  
since  
In all the world my dear one sees but  
you—  
In your sweet babe she finds but you—  
she makes  
Her heart a mirror that reflects but you'  
And then the tear fell, the voice broke  
*Her heart'*  
I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
That glances from the bottom of the  
pool,  
Strike upward thro' the shadow, yet at  
last,  
Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep  
So skilled a nurse about you always—  
nay!  
Some half remorseful kind of pity too—  
Well! well, you know I married Muriel  
Erne  
'I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
wife'—  
I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
child—  
When all at once with some electric thrill  
A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
hands

Fell from each other, and were join  
again  
No second cloudless honeymoon v  
mine  
For by and by she sicken'd of the force  
She dropt the gracious mask of mothe  
hood,  
She came no more to meet me, carryin  
you,  
Nor ever cared to see you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile  
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring  
Why had I sent the ring at first to her?  
Why had I made her love me thro' the  
ring,  
And then had changed? so fickle art  
men—the best!  
Not she—but now my love was hers  
again,  
The ring by right, she said, was hers  
again  
At times too shrilling in her angrier  
moods,  
'That weak and watery nature love you'  
No!  
"Io t'amo, Io t'amo"! I flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her  
lips  
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,  
As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow,  
But still she made her outcry for the ring,  
For one monotonous fancy madden'd  
her,  
Till I myself was madden'd with her cry  
And even that 'Io t'amo,' those three  
sweet  
Italian words, became a weariness  
My people too were scared with eerie  
sounds,  
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,  
A noise of falling weights that never fell,  
Weird whispers, bells that rang without  
a hand,  
Door-handles turn'd when none was at  
the door,  
And bolted doors that open'd of them  
selves



Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd  
 with flowers,  
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
 Of wives and mothers

But the bridal veil—  
 Your nurse is waiting Kiss me child  
 and go

## FORLORN

### I

'HE is fled—I wish him dead—  
 He that wrought my ruin—  
 O the flattery and the craft  
 Which were my undoing  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the storms are blowing

### II

'Who was witness of the crime?  
 Who shall now reveal it?  
 He is fled, or he is dead,  
 Marriage will conceal it  
 In the night, in the night,  
 While the gloom is growing '

### III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
 What is this you're dreaming?  
 There is laughter down in Hell  
 At your simple scheming  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the ghosts are fleeing

### IV

You to place a hand in his  
 Like an honest woman's,  
 You that he with wasted lungs  
 Waiting for your summons  
 In the night, O the night!  
 O the deathwatch beating!

### V

There will come a witness soon  
 Hard to be confuted,  
 All the world will hear a voice  
 Scream you are polluted  
 In the night! O the night,  
 When the owls are wailing!

### VI.

Shame and marriage, Shame :  
 marriage,  
 Fright and foul dissembling,  
 Bantering bridesman, reddening priest  
 Tower and altar trembling .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 When the mind is failing!

### VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
 How your hand is shaking!  
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
 What is this you're taking?  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the house is sleeping

### VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
 O unhappy creature?  
 You that would not tread on a worm  
 For your gentle nature  
 In the night, O the night,  
 O the night of weeping!

### IX

Murder would not veil your sin,  
 Marriage will not hide it,  
 Earth and Hell will brand your name  
 Wretch you must abide it  
 In the night, O the night,  
 Long before the dawning

### X

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
 Tell him you were lying!  
 Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
 You that know you're dying  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the grave is yawning

### XI

No—you will not die before,  
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
 You will live till *that* is born,  
 Then a little longer  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the Fiend is prowling

## XII

Death and marriage, Death and marriage!

Funer! hearses rolling!  
Black with bridal favours next!  
Bridal bells with tolling!  
In the night, O the night,  
When the wolves are howling

## XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,  
Tell him now or never!  
Tell him all before you die,  
Lest you die for ever . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Where there's no forgetting

## XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
All her tale of sadness,  
Water'd every word with tears,  
And eas'd her heart of madness .  
In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
And while the moon was setting

## HAPPY.

## ✓ THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

## I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what  
is it that you fear?  
Is he sick your mate like mine? have  
you lost him, is he fled?  
And there—the heron rises from his  
watch beside the mere,  
And flies above the leper's hut, where  
lives the living-dead

## II

Come back, nor let me know it I would  
he live and die alone?  
And has he not forgiven me yet, his  
over-jealous bride,  
Who am, and was, and will be his, his  
own and only own,  
To share his living death with him,  
die with him side by side?

## III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary  
moor,  
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and  
wears the leper's weed?  
The door is open He 's he standing  
at the door,  
My soldier of the Cross? it is he and  
he indeed!

## IV

My roses—will he take them now—mine,  
his—from off the tree  
We planted both together, happy in  
our marriage morn?  
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought  
Thy fight for Thee,  
And Thou hast made him leper to  
compass him with scorn—

## V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
coward and the base,  
And set a crueller mark than Cain's  
on him, the good and brave!  
He sees me, waves me from him. I will  
front him face to face  
You need not wave me from you I  
would leap into your grave

## VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the  
conquering sword,  
The roses that you cast aside—once  
more I bring you these  
No nearer? do you scorn me when you  
tell me, O my lord,  
You would not mar the beauty of your  
bride with your disease

## VII

You say your body is so foul—then here  
I stand apart,  
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon  
your leprous breast  
The leper plague may scale my skin but  
never taint my heart,  
Your body is not foul to me, and body  
is foul at best.

## VIII

I loved you first when young and fair,  
 but now I love you most;  
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on which  
 the worm will feast,  
 This poor rib grated dungeon of the holy  
 human ghost,  
 This house with all its hateful needs no  
 cleaner than the beast,

## IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which in  
 Eden was divine,  
 This Satan haunted ruin, this little  
 city of sewers,  
 This wall of solid flesh that comes between  
 your soul and mine,  
 Will vanish and give place to the  
 beauty that endures,

## X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual  
 height,  
 When we shall stand transfigured, like  
 Christ on Hermon hill,  
 And moving each to music, soul in soul  
 and light in light,  
 Shall flash thro' one another in a  
 moment as we will.

## XI

Foul! foul! the word was yours not  
 mine, I worship that right hand  
 Which fell'd the foes before you as the  
 woodman fells the wood,  
 And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back  
 the sun of Holy land,  
 And clove the Moslem crescent moon,  
 and changed it into blood

## XII

And once I worshipt all too well this  
 creature of decay,  
 For Age will chink the face, and Death  
 will freeze the supplest limbs—  
 Yet you in your mid manhood—O the  
 grief when yesterday  
 They bore the Cross before you to the  
 chant of funeral hymns

## XIII

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the  
 Psalm, and when  
 The Priest pronounced you dead, and  
 flung the mould upon your feet,  
 A beauty came upon your face, not that  
 of living men,  
 But seen upon the silent brow when  
 life has ceased to beat

## XIV

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not  
 one was there  
 Who saw you kneel beside your bier,  
 and weeping scarce could see,  
 May I come a little nearer, I that heard,  
 and changed the prayer  
 And sang the married 'nos' for the  
 solitary 'me'

## XV

My beauty marred by you? by you! so  
 be it. All is well  
 If I lose it and myself in the higher  
 beauty, yours  
 My beauty lured that falcon from his  
 eyry on the fell,  
 Who never caught one gleam of the  
 beauty which endures—

## XVI

The Count who sought to snap the bond  
 that link'd us life to life,  
 Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric loves'  
 —a little never still—  
 He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,  
 your Ulric is my wife'—  
 A lie by which he thought he could  
 subdue me to his will

## XVII

I knew that you were near me when I  
 let him kiss my brow,  
 Did he touch me on the lips? I was  
 jealous, anger'd, vain,  
 And I meant to make you jealous. Are  
 you jealous of me now?  
 Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave  
 you pain

## XXVI

ou never once accus'd me, but I wept  
 alone, and sigh'd  
 In the winter of the Present for the  
 summer of the Past,  
 but icy winter silence—how it froze you  
 from your bride,  
 Tho' I made one barren effort to break  
 it at the last

## XXVII

brought you, you remember, these roses,  
 when I knew  
 You were parting for the war, and you  
 took them tho' you frown'd;  
 ou frown'd and yet you kiss'd them  
 All at once the trumpet blew,  
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and  
 you hurl'd them to the ground

## XXVIII

You parted for the Holy War without a  
 word to me,  
 And clear myself unask'd—not I My  
 nature was too proud  
 And him I saw but once again, and far  
 away was he,  
 When I was praying in a storm—the  
 crash was long and loud—

## XXIX

That God vould ever slant His bolt from  
 falling on your head—  
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming  
 down the fell—  
 I clapt my hands The sudden fire from  
 Heaven had dash'd him dead,  
 And sent him charr'd and blasted to  
 the deathless fire of Hell

## XXX

See, I sinn'd but for a moment I re-  
 pent'd and repent,  
 And trust myself forgiven by the God  
 to whom I kneel  
 A little nearer? Yes I shall hardly be  
 content  
 Till I be leper like yourself, my love,  
 from head to heel

## XXXI

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would  
 slight our marriage oath  
 I held you at that moment even dearer  
 than before,  
 Now God has made you leper in His  
 loving care for both,  
 That we might cling together, never  
 doubt each other more

## XXXII

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,  
 has join'd our hands of old,  
 If man and wife be but one flesh, let  
 mine be leprous too,  
 As dead from all the human race as if  
 beneath the mould,  
 If you be dead, then I am dead, who  
 only live for you

## XXXIII

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
 follow'd by the Moon?  
 The leech forsake the dying bed for  
 terror of his life?  
 The shadow leave the Substance in the  
 brooding light of noon?  
 Or if I had been the leper would you  
 have left the wife?

## XXXIV

Not take them? Still you wave me off  
 —poor roses—must I go—  
 I have worn them year by year—from  
 the bush we both had set—  
 What? fling them to you?—well—that  
 were hardly gracious No!  
 Your plague but passes by the touch  
 A little nearer yet!

## XXXV

There, there! he burned you, the Priest,  
 the Priest is not to blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either  
 office true  
 I thank him I am happy, happy.  
 Kiss me In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live and  
 die with you

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprosy differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine, and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily, took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church, or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress. He concluded 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility, take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words:

When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard. At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprosy, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage tie was indissoluble, and so be stowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi* burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES<sup>1</sup>

## I

ULYSSES, much experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe of  
ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and  
flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan,

## II

To you that bask below the Lane,  
I soaking here in winter wet—  
The century's three strong eights have  
met  
To drag me down to seventy nine

## III

In summer if I reach my day—  
To you, yet young, who breathe the  
balm  
Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV

I tolerant of the colder time,  
Who love the winter woods, to trace  
On paler heavens the branching grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

## V

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are brief—  
Or marvel how in English air

## VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half accomplish'd bells—

## VII

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Caperera set,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W G Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

<sup>2</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

## VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the form,  
But channing fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>1</sup> your Arabian sands,  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

## X.

The wealth of tropic bower and brake,  
Your Oriental Eden isles,<sup>2</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles,  
Your wonder of the boiling lake,<sup>3</sup>

## XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>4</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>5</sup> the step, your Pontic coast,  
Crag cloister,<sup>6</sup> Anatolian Ghost,<sup>7</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>8</sup> Karnac,<sup>9</sup> and all the rest

## XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my  
friend,  
To prize your various book, and send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine

<sup>1</sup> The tale of Nejd

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines

<sup>3</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>4</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth

<sup>5</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>6</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>8</sup> The Three Cities.

<sup>9</sup> Travels in Egypt.

## TO MARY BOYLE

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

## I.

'SPRING-FLOWERS' While you still  
delay to take  
Your leave of Town,  
Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
flake  
Is fluttering down

## II

Be truer to your promise There I  
heard  
Our cuckoo call.  
Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
Nor wait, till all

## III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
plain  
And garden pass,  
And all the gold from each laburnum  
chain  
Drop to the grass.

## IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,  
Dead with the dead?  
For ere she left us, when we met, you  
prest  
My hand, and said

## V

'I come with your spring-flowers' You  
came not, friend,  
My birds would sing,  
You heard not Take then this spring-  
flower I send,  
This song of spring,

## VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own  
rhyme  
By mine old self,  
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
Laid on the shelf—



## VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whiten  
ing sloe  
And kingcup blaze  
And more than half a hundred years ago,  
In rich fire days,

## VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced  
his land  
In fear of worse,  
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand  
Fill with *his* purse

## IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the  
height  
By tonguester tricks,  
And once—I well remember that red  
night  
When thirty ricks,

## X

All flaming, made in English homestead  
Hell—  
These hands of mine  
Have help't to pass a bucket from the well  
Along the line,

## XI

When this bare dome had not begun to  
gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,  
His girl of girls,

## XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with  
Grief  
Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief  
In change of place.

## XIII

What use to brood? this life of mingled  
pains  
And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains  
The Mystery

## XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the  
wife,  
For ever gone  
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert  
life  
Without the one

## XV

The silver year should cease to mourn  
and sigh—  
Not long to wait—  
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I  
To that dim gate

## XVI

Take, read I and be the faults your Poet  
makes  
Or many or few,  
He rests content, if his young music  
wakes  
A wish in you

## XVII

To change our dark Queen city, all her  
realm  
Of sound and smoke,  
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes  
of elm  
And whispering oak

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

## I

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks  
the mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop  
cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the bee  
Come, Spring, for now from all the  
dripping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself away,  
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine  
leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the  
day

She comes! The loosened rivulets run,  
The frost-head melts upon her golden  
hair.

Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,  
Now wraps her close, now arching  
leaves her bare  
To breaths of balmy air,

## II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome  
her,

About her glance the tits, and shriek  
the jays,

Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,  
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,  
While round her brows a woodland culver  
flits,

Watching her large light eyes and  
gracious look,

And in her open palm a helicon sits  
Patient—the secret splendour of the  
brooks

Come, Spring! She comes on waste and  
wood,

On firm and field—but enter also here,  
Diffuse thyself it will thro' all my blood,  
And, tho' thy violet be taken into care,  
Loage with me all the year!

## III

Once more a downy drift against the  
beech,

Self-darken'd in the sky, descending  
slow!

But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes  
on blanching apricot-like snow in snow  
These will thine eyes not brook in forest-  
paths,

On their perpetual pine, nor round  
the beech,

They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,  
Solved in the tender blushes of the  
perch;

They lose themselves and die  
On that new life that gems the haw-  
thorn line;

Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,  
And out once more in varnish'd glory  
shun

Thy stars of celandine

## IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
lours,

But in the fearful splendour of her  
smiles

I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
towers

Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles  
Now past her feet the swallow circling  
flies,

A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
her hand,

Her light makes rainbows in my closing  
eyes,

I hear a charm of song thro' all the  
land

Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth  
is glad

To roll her North below thy deepening  
dome,

But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,  
And these low bushes dip their twigs  
in foam,

Make all true hearths thy home

## V

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,  
The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,

The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
purrs,

The starling claps his tiny castanets  
Still round her forehead wheels the  
woodland dove,

And scatters on her throat the sparks  
of dew,

The kingcup fills her footprint, and above  
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal  
blue

Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing  
green,

Flies back in fragrant breezes to display  
A tunic white as May!

## VI.

She whispers, 'From the South I bring  
you balm,

For on a tropic mountain was I born,

While some dark dweller by the coco  
palm  
Watch'd my fir meadow zoned with  
airy morn,  
From under rose a muffled moan of  
floods,  
I sat beneath a solitude of snow,  
There no one came, the turf was fresh,  
the woods  
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
vales below  
I saw beyond their silent tops  
The steaming marshes of the scarlet  
cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove  
copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry  
plains  
About a land of canes,

## VII.

'Then from my vapour-girdle soaring  
forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of the  
birds,  
And drunk the dews and drizzle of the  
North,  
That I might mix with men, and hear  
their words  
On pathway'd plains, for—while my  
hand evuls  
Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
flowers  
To work old laws of Love to fresh  
results,  
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—  
I too would teach the man  
Beyond the darker hour to see the  
bright,  
That his fresh life may close as it began,  
The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
Narrowing the bounds of night'

## VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
mark  
The coming year's great good and  
varied ills,  
And new developments, whatever spark

Be struck from out the clash of warning  
wills;  
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,  
The smoke of war's volcano burst  
again  
From horry depths that belt the changeful  
West,  
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings  
of men,  
Or should those fail, that hold the helm,  
While the long day of knowledge  
grows and warms,  
And in the heart of this most ancient  
realm  
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms  
Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

## IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
Who reads thy gradual process, Holy  
Spring  
Thy leaves possess the season in their  
turn,  
And in their time thy warblers rise on  
wing  
How surely glidest thou from March to  
May,  
And changest, breathing it, the sullen  
wind,  
Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
Larger and fuller, like the human  
mind!  
Thy warmths from bud to bud  
Accomplish that blind model in the  
seed,  
And men have hopes, which rise the  
restless blood,  
That after many changes may succeed  
Life, which is Life indeed

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

## I

O YOUNG Mariner,  
You from the heaven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician

With eyes of wonder,  
I am Merlin,  
And I am dying,  
I am Merlin  
Who follow The Gleam

## II.

Mighty the Wizard  
Who found me at sunrise  
Sleeping, and woke me  
And learn'd me Magic !  
Great the Master,  
And sweet the Magic,  
When over the valley,  
In early summers,  
Over the mountain,  
On human faces,  
And all around me,  
Moving to melody,  
Fluted The Gleam

## III.

Once at the crook of a Raven  
Who crost it,  
A barbarous people,  
Blind to the magic,  
And deaf to the melody,  
Surprised at and cursed me  
A demon vexed me,  
The light retreated,  
The landscape darken'd,  
The melody darken'd,  
The Master whisper'd  
'Follow The Gleam'

## IV

Then to the melody,  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland,  
Gnome of the cavern,  
Griffin and Gint,  
And dancing of Furies  
In desolate hollows,  
And wruths of the mountain,  
And rolling of dragons  
By warble of water,  
Or cataract music  
Of falling torrents,  
'Fluted The Gleam

## V

Down from the mountain  
And over the level,  
And streaming and shining on  
Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough ruddy faces  
Of lowly labour,  
Slided The Gleam—

## VI

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the king,  
Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the Tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested The Gleam /

## VII

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot,  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die,  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a  
wintry glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening  
Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a melody  
Yearningly tender,

Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with The Gleam

## VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world,  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom,  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came—  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam

## IX.

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight !  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter, but his ideal

was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life ! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marnage spoilt an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life, when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures ! even as a matter of Art, I am sure' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. 1.)

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this'

Who are you? What ! the Lady  
Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,  
Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the  
vine—

Bacchante, what you will, and if I  
fail

To conjure and concentrate into form  
And colour all you are, the fault is less  
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet  
Could make pure light live on the canvas?  
Art !

Why should I so disrelish that short word?  
Where am I? snow on all the hills !  
so hot,

So fever'd ! never colt would more delight  
To roll himself in meadow grass than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills

Nurse, were you hired? or came of  
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?  
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal  
church—

O yes ! I hired you for a season there,  
And then we parted, but you look so  
kind

That you will not deny my sultry throat  
One draught of icy water There—you  
spill

The drops upon my forehead Your  
hand shakes

I am ashamed I am a trouble to you,  
Could kneel for your forgiveness Are  
they tears?

For me—the, do me too much grace—  
for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Verbing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes  
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,  
—words,

Wild bubble I have stumbled back  
again

Into the common day, the sounder self  
God may me there, if only for your sake,  
The truest, kindest, noblest hearted wife  
That ever wore a Christian marriage  
ring;

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,  
That wife and children were an Artist  
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven  
of Art,

And lured me from the household fire on  
earth

To you my day, have been a life long lie,  
Grasped on half a truth; and tho' you say  
'Take comfort you have won the Painter's  
fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in me,  
And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
there

What fame? I am not Raphael,  
Titian—no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry  
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but  
mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular  
breath,

May fort awhile beneath the sun, may  
roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about it—  
There!

The colour'd bubble bursts above the  
abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
with me  
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen  
To flame along another dreary day

Your hand How bright you keep your  
marriage ring!

Raise me I thank you

Has your opiate then  
Bred this black mood? or am I conscious,  
more

Than other Masters, of the chasm  
between

Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom  
of Age

And suffering cloud the height I stand  
upon

Even from myself? stand? stood  
no more

And yet  
The world would lose, if such a wife as  
you

Should vanish unrecorded Might I  
crave

One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim  
On your obedience, and my strongest  
wish

Falls flat before your least unwillingness  
Still would you—if it please you—sit  
to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear  
summer noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to foot  
With your own shadow in the placid lake,  
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to  
heart

I had been among the hills, and brought  
you down

A length of staghorn moss, and this you  
twined

About her cap I see the picture yet,  
Mother and child A sound from far  
away,

No louder than a bee among the flowers,  
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep  
You still'd it for the moment with a song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood  
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will  
You should have been—I might have  
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you  
now—

The true Alcestis of the time Your  
song—

Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I—even I—at times remember'd  
you

'Beat upon mine, little heart' beat,  
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue eyes  
to your feet,

My sweet!

Less profile! turn to me—three quarter  
face

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my  
bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you  
this!

And I blind your pretty blue eyes with  
a kiss!

Sleep!

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow'—

You watch'd not I, she did not grow,  
she died

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow,

And gather the roses whenever they  
blow,

And find the white heather wherever  
you go,

My sweet!

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
heaven

With Milton's amaranth There, there,  
there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle  
tools,

Stumpt into dust—tremulous, all awry,  
Blurr'd like a landscape in a ruffled pool,—

Not one stroke firm This Art, that  
harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-  
like,

Who love her still, and whimper, im-  
potent

To win her back before I die—and  
then—

Then, in the loud world's bastard judg-  
ment-day,

One truth will damn me with the mind-  
less mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation,  
more

Than all the myriad lies, that blacken  
round

The corpse of every man that gains a  
name,

'This model husband, this fine Artist'  
Fool,

What matter? Six foot deep of burial  
mould

Will dull their comments! Ay, but when  
the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,  
and throbs

Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*  
should ask

'Why left you wife and children? for  
my sake,

According to my word?' and I replied  
'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would

sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of  
Hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussul-  
man

Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the  
sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and point  
and jeer,

And gibber at the worm, who, living,  
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and  
lost

Salvation for a sketch

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my head  
Have crazed me Someone knocking

there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come? to  
find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the  
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her house

"by leave the windows blinded, and if  
 so,  
 Let far farewell for me, and tell him—  
 Hope!  
 I hear a death bed Angel whisper 'Hope.'  
 "The miserable have no medicine  
 But wait Hope!" He said it in  
 the play  
 His crime was of the senses, of the mind  
 More, worse, cold, calculated  
 Tell my son—  
 O let me lean my head upon your breast  
 'But little heart' on this fool brain of  
 mine  
 I once had friends—and many—none  
 like you  
 I love you more than when we married  
 Hope!  
 O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
 Human forgiveness touches heaven, and  
 thence—  
 For you forgive me, you are sure of that—  
 Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven

## PARNASSUS

*Exegi monumentum  
 Quod non  
 Possit effacere*

*in immutabilis  
 Aeternum series et signa temporum.—HORACE.*

### I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over  
 the sacred fountain?  
 Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised  
 to the heights of the mountain,  
 And over the flight of the Ages! O  
 Goddesses, help me up thither!  
 Lightning may shrivel the laurel of  
 Caesar, but mine would not wither  
 Sleep is the mountain, but you, you will  
 help me to overcome it,  
 And stand with my head in the zenith,  
 and roll my voice from the summit,  
 sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth  
 and her listening nations,  
 And mix with the great Spheric music of  
 stars and of constellations

### T

### II

What be those two shapes high over the  
 sacred fountain,  
 Taller than all the Muses, and huger  
 than all the mountain?  
 On those two known peaks they stand  
 ever spreading and heightening,  
 Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by  
 more than lightning!  
 Look, in their deep double shadow the  
 crown'd ones all disappearing!  
 Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope  
 for a deathless hearing!  
 'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass on!  
 the sight confuses—  
 These are Astronomy and Geology, ter-  
 rible Muses!

### III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off  
 a pure Parnian altar,  
 Tho' their music here be mortal need the  
 singer greatly care?  
 Other songs for other worlds! the fire  
 within him would not falter,  
 Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here  
 is Homer there

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the  
 soul of a man,  
 And the man said 'Am I your debtor?  
 And the Lord—'Not yet but make it  
 as clean as you can,  
 And then I will let you a better'

### I

If my body come from brutes, my soul  
 uncertain, or a fable,  
 Why not bask amid the senses while  
 the sun of morning shines,  
 I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,  
 and in my stable,  
 Youth and Health, and birth and  
 wealth, and choice of women and  
 of wines?



## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
Age, save breaking my bones on  
the rack?

Would I had prst in the morning that  
looks so bright from afar!

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast  
that was linkt with thee eighty  
years back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
heaven that hangs on a star

## I

If my body come from brutes, tho  
somewhat finer than their own,

I am heir, and this my kingdom  
Shall the royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag  
me from the throne,

Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and  
rule thy Province of the brute

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and  
I gaze at a field in the Past,

Where I sank with the body at times  
in the sloughs of a low desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the  
Man is quiet at last

As he stands on the heights of his life  
with a glimpse of a height that is  
higher

## FAR—FAR—AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields  
he knew

As where earth's green stole into heaven's  
own hue,

Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?  
The mellow lull-lull-lone of evening bells

Far—far—away

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain  
or joy,

Thro' those three words would haunt him  
when a boy,

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
breath

From some far dawn beyond the doors  
of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of  
Birth,

The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,  
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words  
could give?

O dying words, can Music make you live  
Far—far—away?

## POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,

And if we move to such a goal

As Wisdom hopes to gain,

Then you that drive, and know your Craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,

Nor lend an ear to random cries,

Or you may drive in vain,

For some cry 'Quick' and some cry  
'Slow,'

But, while the hills remain,

Up hill 'Too slow' will need the whip,

Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chum

## BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater  
of European confusion,

O you with your passionate shriek for  
the rights of an equal humanity,

How often your Re-volution has proven  
but E-volution

Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of  
a civic insanity!

## THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in your  
May,  
Two words, 'My Rose' set all your face  
aglow,  
And now that I am white, and you are  
gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,  
Blooms in the Past, but close to me  
to day  
As this red rose, which on our terrace here  
Glow in the blue of fifty miles away

## THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd  
with woe  
You'll but sicken at the shifting scenes  
And yet be patient Our Playwright  
may show  
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama  
means.

## ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are incom-  
plete,  
I prize that soul where man and woman  
meet,  
Which types all Nature's male and female  
plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not woman  
man

## TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross and thence  
maintain  
Our darker future May your fears be  
vain!  
At times the small black fly upon the pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant plain

## THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes  
February fair maid!

## THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming  
I know it, I know it, I know it  
Light again, leaf again, life again, love  
again,'  
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue  
Last year you sang it as gladly  
'New, new new, new'! Is it then so  
new  
That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young  
again,'  
Never a prophet so crazy!  
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,  
See, there is hardly a daisy

'Here again, here, here, here, happy  
year'  
O warble unchidden, unbidden!  
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,  
And all the winters are hidden

## THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,  
Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
Living gold,

Summer-rich

Then, and then  
Autumn changed,  
Soberer hues  
Gold again,

All his leaves

Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength

## IN MEMORIAM

W G WARD

FAREWELL, whose living like I shall  
not find,

Whose Faith and Work were bells of  
full accord,

My friend, the most unworldly of man  
kind,

Most generous of all Ultramontanes,  
Ward,

How subtle at tierce and quart of mind  
with mind,

How loyal in the following of thy  
Lord !

# THE DEATH OF CENONE

## AND OTHER POEMS

### JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

To E. T.

THERE on the top of the down,  
The wild heather round me and over me  
June's high blue,  
When I look'd at the bracken so bright  
and the heather so brown,  
I thought to myself I would offer this  
book to you,  
This, and my love together,  
To you that are seventy seven  
With a faith as clear as the heights of  
the June blue heaven,  
And a fancy as summer-new  
As the green of the bracken amid the  
gloom of the heather

### TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I

DEAR Master in our classic town,  
You, loved by all the younger gown  
There at Balliol,  
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II

And read a Grecian tale re told,  
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,  
Quintus Calaber  
Somewhat lazily handled of old,

III

And on this white midwinter day—  
For have the far-off hymns of May,  
All her melodies,  
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

IV

To day, before you turn again  
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,  
Hear my cataract's  
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V

Till, led by dream and vague desire,  
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,  
Find her warrior  
Stark and dark in his funeral fire

### THE DEATH OF CENONE

CENONE sat within the cave from out  
Whose ivy mottled mouth she used to gaze  
Down at the Troad, but the goodly view  
Was now one blank and all the serpent  
vines  
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had  
risen,  
And gliding thro' the branches over-  
bower'd  
The naked Three, were wither'd long  
ago,  
And thro' the sunless winter morning  
mist  
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth  
And while she stared at those dead  
cords that ran  
Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to  
tree,  
But once were gayer than a dawning sky  
With many a pendent bell and fragrant  
star,  
Her Past became her Present, and she  
saw  
Him, climbing toward her with the  
golden fruit,  
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,  
Her husband in the flush of youth and  
dawn,  
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God

Anon from out the long ravine below,  
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at first

Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead  
When driven to Hades, but, in coming near,

Across the downward thunder of the brook

Sounded 'Cenone', and on a sudden he,  
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,  
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,  
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the mist

Rose, like the wrath of his dead self,  
and moan'd

'Cenone, my Cenone, while we dwelt  
Together in this valley—happy then—  
Too happy had I died within thine arms,

Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our peace,

And sunder'd each from each I am dying now

Pierced by a poison'd dart Save me.  
Thou knowest,

Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm

May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame

Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee  
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten lamb,

The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee

My life and death are in thy hand The Gods

Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer  
For pity Let me owe my life to thee  
I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou forgive,

Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate  
Cenone, by thy love which once was mine,

Help, heal me I am poison'd to the heart.'

'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,  
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'

He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist at once

Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,

But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,  
Fell headlong dead, and of the shepherds—  
one

Their oldest, and the same who first had found

Paris, a naked babe, among the woods  
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,  
And shouted, and the shepherds heard  
and came

One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the squalid hair,

One kiss'd his hand, another closed his eyes,

And then, remembering the gay playmate rear'd

Among them, and forgetful of the man,  
Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilium,  
these

All that dry long labour'd, hewing the pines,

And built their shepherd-prince a funeral pile,

And, while the star of eve was drawing light

From the dead sun, kindled the pyre,  
and all

Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his name

But when the white fog vanish'd like a ghost

Before the day, and every topmost pine  
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her cave,

Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon  
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a face,—

His face deform'd by lurid blotch and blain—

There, like a creature frozen to the heart  
Beyond all hope of warmth, Cenone sat  
Not moving, till in front of that ravine  
Which drowns in gloom, self-darken'd from the west,

The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy  
Then her head sank, she slept, and thro' her dream

A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,  
Cenone' I can wrong thee now no more,

Cenone, my Cenone,' and the dream

Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath  
the stars.

What star could I have so low? not  
Ibion yet

What light was that? She rose and  
sleazily down,

By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,  
Faced, following, as in trance the silent  
cry

She waled a bird of prey that scream'd  
and past;

She roused a snake that hissing writhed  
away;

A panther sprang across her path, she  
heard

The shriek of some lost life among the  
pines,

But when she gain'd the broader vale,  
and saw

The ring of faces radden'd by the flames  
Enfolding that dark body which had lain  
Of old in her embrace, pruned—and then  
ask'd

Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'  
But every man was mute for reverence  
Then moving quickly forward till the heat  
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice  
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon  
the pyre?'

Whereon their oldest and their boldest  
said,

'He, whom thou wouldst not hear!' and  
all at once

The morning light of happy marriage  
broke

Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,  
And muffling up her comely head, and  
crying

'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral  
pile,

And mixt herself with him and past in  
fire

## ST TELEMACHUS

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak  
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about  
the globe?

For day by day, thro' many a blood-red  
eve,

In that four hundredth summer after  
Christ,

The wrathful sunset glared against a cross  
Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old  
fane

No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed  
On one huge slope beyond, where in his  
cave

The man, whose pious hand had built  
the cross,

A man who never changed a word with  
men,

Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint

Ever after ever that haggard anchorite  
Would haunt the desolated fane, and  
there

Gave at the ruin, often mutter low

'Vicisti Galilæe', louder again,

Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the  
God,

'Vicisti Galilee!' but—when now  
Bathed in that lurid crimson—ask'd 'Is  
earth

On fire to the West? or is the Demon-  
god

Wroth at his fall?' and heard an answer  
'Wake

Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life  
Of self suppression, not of selfless love'  
And once a flight of shadowy fighters  
cross

The disk, and once, he thought, a shape  
with wings

Came sweeping by him, and pointed to  
the West,

And at his ear he heard a whisper  
'Rome'

And in his heart he cried 'The call of  
God!'

And call'd rose, and, slowly plunging  
down

Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face  
By waste and field and town of alien  
tongue,

Following a hundred sunsets, and the  
sphere

Of westward wheeling stars, and every  
dawn

Struck from him his own shadow on to  
Rome

Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he  
 touch'd his goal,  
 The Christian city All her splendour  
 fail'd  
 To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to  
 see,  
 Fleeting betwixt her column'd palace-  
 walls,  
 The shape with wings Anon there past  
 a crowd  
 With shameless laughter, Pagan oath,  
 and jest,  
 Hard Romans brawling of their mon-  
 strous games,  
 He, all but deaf thro' age and wear-  
 ness,  
 And muttering to himself 'The call of  
 God'  
 And borne along by that full stream of  
 men,  
 Like some old wreck on some indrawing  
 sea,  
 Gam'd their huge Colosseum The caged  
 beast  
 Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian  
 blood  
 Three slaves were trailing a dead lion  
 away,  
 One, a dead man He stumbled in, and  
 sat  
 Blinded, but when the momentary gloom,  
 Made by the noonday blaze without, had  
 left  
 His aged eyes, he raised them, and  
 beheld  
 A blood red awning waver overhead,  
 The dust send up a steam of human  
 blood,  
 The gladiators moving toward their fight,  
 And eighty thousand Christian faces  
 watch  
 Man murder man A sudden strength  
 from heaven,  
 As some great shock may wake a palsied  
 limb,  
 Turn'd him again to boy, for up he  
 sprang,  
 And ghid'd lightly down the stairs, and  
 o'er

The barrier that divided beast from man  
 Slpt, and ran on, and flung himself  
 between  
 The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'For  
 bear  
 In the great name of Him who died for  
 men,  
 Christ Jesus!' For one moment after-  
 ward  
 A silence follow'd as of death, and then  
 A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,  
 Then one deep roar as of a breaking sea,  
 And then a shower of stones that stoned  
 him dead,  
 And then once more a silence as of death  
 His dream became a deed that woke  
 the world,  
 For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze  
 Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler  
 hearts  
 In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame  
 The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his  
 death,  
 And preachers linger'd o'er his dying  
 words,  
 Which would not die, but echo'd on to  
 reach  
 Honorius, till he heard them, and de-  
 creed  
 That Rome no more should wallow in  
 this old lust  
 Of Paganism, and make her festal hour  
 Dark with the blood of man who mur-  
 der'd man

[For Honorius, who succeeded to the sov-  
 ereignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial  
 combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion  
 of the following event There was one Tele-  
 machus, embracing the ascetic mode of life, who  
 setting out from the East and arriving at Rome  
 for this very purpose, while that accursed spec-  
 tacle was being performed, entered himself the  
 circus, and descending into the arena, attempted  
 to hold back those who wielded deadly weapons  
 against each other The spectators of the mur-  
 derous fray, possess with the drunken glee of  
 the demon who delights in such bloodshed, stoned  
 to death the preacher of peace. The admirable  
 Emperor learning this put a stop to that evil ex-  
 hibition — Theodoret's *Ecclesiastical History*]

## AKBAR'S DREAM

AN INSCRIPTION IN ARABIC FONT  
A TOMB IN KASHMIR (Shah  
Jahan's tomb)

Of my own tomb I have no fear  
For this and in my heart I have  
seen a world's journeyman

Pacific, and Islam for ever  
And religion free. Then rise and  
be true.

If I be a mosque, people say, or a  
big house, or a tomb, or a church,  
I am the world's journeyman.

So I am I, for I am the world's  
journeyman, and I am the world's  
journeyman.

But I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

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For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

For I am the world's journeyman  
for I am the world's journeyman.

Thro' all the vast dominion which a sword,  
That only conquers men to conquer  
peace,

Has won me Alla be my guide!

But come,

My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,  
Sit by my side While thou art one  
with me,

I seem no longer like a lonely man  
In the King's garden, gathering here and  
there

I rom each fair plant the blossom choicest-  
grown

To wreath a crown not only for the  
King

But in due time for every Mussulmân,  
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and  
Parsee,

Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan  
Well spake thy brother in his hymn to  
heaven

"Thy glory baffles wisdom All the  
tracks

Of science making toward Thy Perfect  
ness

Are blinding desert sand, we scarce can  
spell

The Alf of Thine alphabet of Love"

He knows Himself, men nor themselves  
nor Him,

For every splinter'd fraction of a sect  
Will clamour "I am on the Perfect Way,  
All else is to perdition"

Shall the rose  
Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the  
palm

Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?  
The mango spurn the melon at his foot?

"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for  
man"

Look how the living pulse of Alla beats  
Thro' all His world If every single star

Should shriek its claim "I only am in  
heaven"

Why that were such sphere music as the  
Greek

Had hardly dream'd of There is light  
in all,

And light, with more or less of shade,  
in all



Man-modes of worship, but our Ulama,  
 Who "sitting on green sofas contem-  
 plate  
 The torment of the damn'd" already,  
 these  
 Are like wild brutes new-caged—the  
 narrower  
 The cage, the more their fury Me they  
 front

With sullen brows What wonder ' I  
 decreed

That even the dog was clean, that men  
 may taste

Swine-flesh, drunk wine, they know too  
 that whene'er

In our free Hall, where each philosophy  
 And mood of faith may hold its own,  
 they blurt

Their furious formalisms, I but hear  
 The clash of tides that meet in narrow  
 seas —

Not the Great Voice not the true Deep  
 To drive

A people from their ancient fold of Faith,  
 And wall them up perforce in mine—  
 unwise,

Unkinglike,—and the morning of my  
 reign

Was reddened by that cloud of shame  
 when I

I hate the rancour of their castes and  
 creeds,

I let men worship as they will, I reap  
 No revenue from the field of unbelief  
 I cull from every faith and race the best  
 And bravest soul for counsellor and  
 friend.

I loathe the very name of infidel  
 I stagger at the Korân and the sword  
 I shudder at the Christian and the stake,  
 Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is  
 Love,"

And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,  
 Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried  
 "Love one another little ones" and  
 "bless"

Whom? even "your persecutors"! there  
 methought

The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam  
 Than glances from the sun of our Islâm

And thou rememberest what a fury  
 shook

Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when  
 he,

That other, prophet of their fall, pro-  
 claimed

His Master as "the Sun of Righteous-  
 ness,"

Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught  
 and held

His people by the bridle-rein of Truth  
 What art thou saying? "And was  
 not Alla call'd

In old Irân the Sun of Love? and Love  
 The net of truth?"

A voice from old Irân '  
 Nay, but I know it—*his*, the hoary Sheik,  
 On whom the women shrieking "Atheist"  
 flung

Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist  
 Who all but lost himself in Alla, him  
 Abû Saïd——

—a sun but dimly seen  
 Here, till the mortal morning mists of  
 earth

Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed  
 and race

Shall bear false witness each of each, no  
 more,

But find their limits by that larger light,  
 And overstep them, moving easily  
 Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,  
 The truth of Love

The sun, the sun ' they rail  
 At me the Zoroastrian Let the Sun,  
 Who heats our earth to yield us grain  
 and fruit,

And laughs upon thy field as well as  
 mine,

And warms the blood of Shah and  
 Sunnee,

Symbol the Eternal! Yea and may not  
 kings

Express Him also by their warmth of  
 love

For all they rule—by equal law for all?  
 By deeds a light to men?

But no such light  
 Glanced from our Presence on the face  
 of one,

And over all the never changing One  
And ever changing Many, in praise of  
Whom

The Christian bell, the cry from off the  
mosque,

And vaguer voices of Polytheism  
We're but one music, harmonising  
"Pray"

There westward—under yon slow  
falling star,

The Christians own a Spiritual Head,  
And following thy true counsel, by thine  
aid,

Will I am such in our Islâm, for no  
Hopes of glory, but for power to fuse  
My myriads into union under one,  
To hunt the tiger of oppression out  
From office, and to spread the Divine  
Faith

Like calming oil on all their stormy  
creeds

And fill the hollows between wave and  
wave,

To nurse my children on the milk of  
Truth,

And alchemise old hates into the gold  
Of Love, and make it current, and beat  
back

The menacing poison of intolerant priests,  
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—  
One Allah! one Kâhib!

Still—at times

A doubt, a fear,—and yester afternoon  
I dream'd,—thou knowest how deep a  
well of love

My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine  
heart,—

And yet so wild and wayward that my  
dream—

He glares askance at thee as one of those  
Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup  
Of counsel—so—I pry thee—

Well, I dream'd

That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred  
fane,

A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor  
Church,

But loftier, simpler, always open door'd  
To every breath from heaven, and Truth  
and Peace

And cast aside, when old, for never,—  
Forms!

The natural in Nature's market place—  
The silent Asplendours of heaven in man  
Made vocal—hallowed by a Power  
That is not seen and rules from far away—  
A silken cord let down from Paradise,  
Where our Philosophies would fail, to  
draw

The crowd from wallowing in the mire  
of earth,

And all the more, when these behold  
their Lord,

Who shape the forms, obey them, and  
himself

Are on this bank in some way live the  
life

Yond the bridge, and serve that Infinite  
within us, as without, that All-in-all,

And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein,  
 But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,  
 I heard a mocking laugh "the new Korân!"  
 And on the sudden, and with a cry "Saleem"  
 Thou, thou—I saw thee fall before me, and then  
 Me too the black wing'd Azrael overcame,  
 But Death had ears and eyes, I watch'd my son,  
 And those that follow'd, loosen, stone from stone,  
 All my fair work, and from the ruin arose  
 The shriek and curse of trampled millions, even  
 As in the time before, but while I groan'd,  
 From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,  
 Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,  
 Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt therein,  
 Nor in the field without were seen or heard  
 Fires of Sûttee, nor wail of baby-wife,  
 Or Indian widow, and in sleep I said  
 "All praise to Alla by whatever hands  
 My mission be accomplish'd!" but we hear  
 Music our palace is awake, and morn  
 Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night  
 From off the rosy cheek of waking Day  
 Our hymn to the sun They sing it  
 Let us go'

## HYMN

## I

Once again thou flame'st heavenward,  
 once again we see thee rise  
 Every morning is thy birthday gladdening  
 human hearts and eyes.  
 Every morning here we greet it,  
 bowing lowly down before thee,  
 Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in  
 thine ever changing skies

## II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowin'  
 light from clime to clime,  
 Hear thy myriad laureates hail the  
 monarch in their woodland rhyme  
 Warble bird, and open flower, and  
 men, below the dome of azure  
 Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the  
 flame that measures Time'

## NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun, at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces, his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity

'*Thy glory baffles wisdom*' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from Islâm and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan writer, but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islâm in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.)

Abul Fazl thus gives an account of himself 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly, my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary



husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed

*Excerpt* He forbade marriage before the age of puberty

*Indian note* Akbar ordained that remarriage was lawful

*Muse* 'About a watch before daylight, says Abdul Faiz a mufti played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had a black velvet robe of the texture of mair strained in water—do not pass on'

'*The Divine Faith* The Divine Faith was used away under the immediate sanction of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription on the head of the poem. The document referred to, Abdul Faiz says 'It is a most excellent rule (1) the Court became a pattern; (2) one of the sages and learned of all creeds, the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good nature; (3) perfect toleration or peace with all was established, and (4) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty and those good in the pillars of disgrace. Died September 1579—Ragib 937 (Block-mann xiv)

## THE BANDIT'S DEATH

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT<sup>1</sup>

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,  
THIR GREATER AS, HEART, FLOOD AND DEED,  
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN I MY LOT  
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND  
KNOWN

SIR, do you see this dagger? nay why  
do you start aside?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I am  
the Bandit's bride

You have set a price on his head I may  
claim it without a lie

What have I here in the cloth? I will  
show it you by and by

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Rizzaro)—but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations

Sir, I was once a wife I had one brief  
summer of bliss

But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain,  
and he stabb'd my Pietro with this

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave  
in the mountain, and there one  
day

He had left his dagger behind him I  
found it I hid it away

For he reckon'd with the blood of Pietro;  
his kisses were red with his crime,  
And I cried to the saints to avenge me  
They heard, they bled their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he  
loved to dandle the child,  
And that was a line between us but I  
—to be reconciled?

No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think  
I hated him here,  
And—well, if I sinn'd last night, I would  
find the Priest and confess

Lasten 's a three were alone in the dell  
at the close of the day  
I was hilling a song to the babe, and I  
laugh'd like a dawn in May

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers  
crossing the ridge  
And he caught my little one from me  
we dipt down under the budge

By the great dead pine—you know it—  
and heard us we crouch'd below,  
The clatter of arms, and voices, and men  
passing to and fro

Black was the night when we crept away  
—not a star in the sky—  
Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the  
little one utter'd a cry

I whisper'd 'give it to me' but he would  
not answer me—then  
He gript it so hard by the throat that  
'he boy never cried again

We return'd to his cave—the link was  
broken—he sobb'd and he wept,  
And cursed himself, then he yawn'd, for  
the wretch *could* sleep, and he  
slept

Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a  
ray red as blood  
Glanced on the strangled face—I could  
make Sleep Death, if I would—

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the  
murderous father at rest,  
I drove the blade that had slain my hus-  
band thrice thro' his breast

He was loved at least by his dog it was  
chain'd, but its horrible yell  
'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has  
kill'd him' rang out 'll down  
thro' the dell,

Till I felt I could end myself too with the  
dagger—so defend'd and dazed—  
Take it, and save me from it! I fled  
I was all but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart,  
and the weight that dragg'd at  
my hand,  
But thanks to the Blessed Sunts that I  
came on none of his band,

And the band will be scatter'd now their  
gallant captain is dead,  
For I with this dagger of his—do you  
doubt me? Here is his head!

## THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

This is written in the dialect which was cur-  
rent in my youth at Spilsby and in the country  
about it.

### I

EH? good daay! good daay! thaw it  
bean't not mooch of a daay,  
Nasty, casselty<sup>1</sup> weather! an' mea haafe  
down wi' my haay!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Casselty,' casualty, chance weather  
<sup>2</sup> 'Haafe down wi' my haay,' while my grass  
is only half mown

### II

How be the farm gittin on? noaways  
Gittin on i'deed!  
Why, tonups was haafe on 'em fingers  
an' toas,<sup>1</sup> an' the mare brokken  
kneead,  
An' pigs didn't sell at fall,<sup>2</sup> an' wa lost  
wer Haldeny cow,  
An' it beats ma to know wot she died on,  
but wool's looking oop ony how

### III

An' soa they've maade tha a prinson, an'  
thou'll git along, niver fear,  
Fur I bean chuch-warden mysen i' the  
parish fur fifteen year  
Well—sin ther bea chuch-wardens, ther  
mun be parsons an' all,  
An' if t'one stick alongside t'uther<sup>3</sup> the  
chuch weant happen a fall

### IV

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' agean the  
toithe an' the raate,  
Till I fun<sup>4</sup> that it warn't not the gaainst<sup>5</sup>  
way to the narra Gaate  
An' I can't abear 'em, I can't, fur a lot  
on 'em coom'd ta-year<sup>6</sup>—  
I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to  
my pond to wesh thessens there—  
Sa I sticks like the ivin<sup>7</sup> as long as I  
lives to the owd chuch now,  
Fur they wesh'd their sins i' my pond,  
an' I doubts they poison'd the cow

### V

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop They says  
'at he coom'd fra nowt—  
Burn i' trade Sa I warrants 'e niver  
said haafe wot 'e thowt,  
But 'e creeapt an' 'e crawl'd along, till  
'e fecald 'e could howd is oan,  
Then 'e married a great Yerl's darter,  
an' sits o' the Bishop's throan

<sup>1</sup> 'Fingers and toes, a disease in turnips.  
<sup>2</sup> 'Fall,' autumn  
<sup>3</sup> 'If t'one stick alongside t'uther,' if the one  
hold by the other One is pronounced like 'own  
<sup>4</sup> 'Fun,' found <sup>5</sup> 'Gaainist,' nearest  
<sup>6</sup> 'Ta year,' this year <sup>7</sup> 'Ivin,' ivy

## VI

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an'  
tha weant be taakin' offence,  
Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a  
hoonderd haacre o' sense—  
But sich an obstropulous<sup>1</sup> lad—naay,  
naay—fur I minds tha sa well,  
Tha'd niver not hopple<sup>2</sup> thy tongue, an'  
the tongue's sit afire o' Hell,  
As I says to my missis to-daay, when she  
hurl'd a plaate at the cat  
An' anoother agean my noase Ya was  
niver sa bad as that

## VII

But I minds when i' Howlaby beck won  
dray ya was ticklin' o' trout,  
An' keeaper 'e seed y<sup>1</sup> an roon'd, an' 'e  
beal'd<sup>3</sup> to ya 'Lad coom hout'  
An' ya stood oop narht i' the beck, an'  
ya tell'd 'im to knaw his awn  
plaaice  
An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya  
thraw'd the fish i' 'is faace,  
An' 'e torn'd<sup>4</sup> as red as a stag tuckey's<sup>5</sup>  
wattles, but theer an' then  
I coamb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd  
niver not do it agean

## VIII

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden,  
when thou was a height-year-  
howd,<sup>6</sup>  
An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pip  
pins as iver they'd 'owd,<sup>7</sup>  
An' thou was as pearky<sup>8</sup> as owt, an' tha  
maade me as mad as mad,  
But I says to tha 'keeap 'em, an' wel-  
come' fur thou was the Parson's  
lad

<sup>1</sup> 'Obstropulous, obstreperous—here the Curate makes a sign of deprecation

<sup>2</sup> 'Hopple' or 'hobble, to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

<sup>3</sup> 'Beal d, bellowed

<sup>4</sup> In such words as 'torned' (turned), 'hurled, the *r* is hardly audible

<sup>5</sup> 'Stag tuckey, turkey cock.

<sup>6</sup> 'Height year howd,' eight year old

<sup>7</sup> 'Owd,' hold <sup>8</sup> 'Peärky,' pert

## IX.

An Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then  
tarkes kindly to me,  
An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an'  
coom'd to the top o' the tree,  
Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they  
maakes ma a help to the poor,  
When I gits the plaate fuller o' Soondays  
nor ony chuch-warden afoor,  
Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep'  
mysen meek as a lamb,  
An' saw by the Graace o' the Lord, Mr  
Harry, I ham wot I ham

## X

But Parson 'e *will* speak out, saw, now  
'e be sixty seven,  
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scraby fur  
owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven,  
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver  
tha means to git 'igher,  
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld,<sup>1</sup>  
an' not the faults o' the Squire  
An' I reckons thi'll light of a livin' some-  
wheers i' the Wowd<sup>2</sup> or the Fen,  
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an'  
keeaps thysen to thysen  
But niver not speak plaam out, if tha  
wants to git forrards a bit,  
But creeap along the hedge bottoms, an'  
thou'll be a Bishop yit

## XI

Naay, but tha *mun* speak hout to the  
Baptuses here i' the town,  
Fur moast on 'em talks agean tithes, an'  
I'd like tha to preach 'em down,  
Fur *they*'ve bin a-preachin' *mea* down,  
they heve, an' I haates 'em now,  
Fur they leaved their nasty sins i' *my*  
pond, an' it poison'd the cow

<sup>1</sup> 'Wo'ld,' the world Short o

<sup>2</sup> 'Wowd,' wold

## CHARITY

## I

WHAT am I doing, you say to me,  
 'wasting the sweet summer hours?'  
 Haven't you eyes? I am dressing the  
 grave of a woman with flowers

## II

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's  
 own scriptures tell,  
 And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman,  
 God bless her, kept me from Hell

## III

Love me? O yes, no doubt—how long  
 —till you threw me aside!  
 Dresses and laces and jewels and never  
 a ring for the bride

## IV

All very well just now to be calling me  
 darling and sweet,  
 And after a while would it matter so  
 much if I came on the street?

## V

You when I met you first—when *he*  
 brought you!—I turn'd away  
 And the hard blue eyes have it still, that  
 stare of a beast of prey.

## VI

You were his friend—you—you—when  
 he promised to make me his bride,  
 And you knew that he meant to betray  
 me—you knew—you knew that  
 he lied

## VII

He married an heiress, an orphan with  
 half a shire of estate,—  
 I sent him a desolate wail and a curse,  
 when I learn'd my fate

## VIII

For I used to play with the knife, creep  
 down to the river shore,

T

Moan to myself 'one plunge—then quiet  
 for evermore'

## IX

Would the man have a touch of remorse  
 when he heard what an end was  
 mine?  
 Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest  
 over their wine?

## X

Money—my hire—*his* money—I sent  
 him back what he gave,—  
 Will you move a little that way? your  
 shadow falls on the grave

## XI

Two trains clash'd then and there he  
 was crush'd in a moment and  
 died,  
 But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd,  
 tho' sitting close at his side

## XII

She found my letter upon him, my wail  
 of reproach and scorn,  
 I had cursed the woman he married, and  
 him, and the day I was born

## XIII

They put him aside for ever, and after a  
 week—no more—  
 A stranger as welcome as Satan—a widow  
 came to my door

## XIV

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was  
 mad, I was raving-wild,  
 I was close on that hour of dishonour,  
 the birth of a baseborn child

## XV

O you that can flatter your victims, and  
 juggle, and lie and cajole,  
 Man, can you even guess at the love of  
 a soul for a soul?



## XVI

I had cursed her as woman and wife,  
and in wife and woman I found  
The tenderest Christ-like creature that  
ever stepped on the ground

## XVII

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed  
me, she sat day and night by my  
bed,  
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy  
born happily dead

## XVIII

And her name? what was it? I ask'd  
her She said with a sudden glow  
On her patient face 'My dear, I will  
tell you before I go'

## XIX

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd,  
I sprang from my seat,  
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung  
myself down at her feet,

## XX

And we pray'd together for him, for him  
who had given her the name  
She has left me enough to live on I  
need no wages of shame

## XXI

She died of a fever caught when a nurse  
in a hospital ward  
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens,  
she is face to face with her Lord,

## XXII

And He sees not her like anywhere in  
this pitiless world of ours!  
I have told you my tale Get you gone  
I am dressing her grave with  
flowers

## KAPIOLANI.

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived  
in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this  
century. She won the cause of Christianity by  
openly defying the priests of the terrible, oddest  
Peelè. In spite of the threats of vengeance she  
ascended the volcano Mount Loa, then climbed  
down over a bank of lava 400 feet high to the  
great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilauea—the  
home and haire of the goddess, and flung  
into the boiling lava the consecrated berries  
which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle

## I

WHY from the terrors of Nature  
people have fashion'd and worship  
a Spirit of Evil,  
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who  
calls to them  
'Set yourselves free'

## II

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol  
a valorous weapon in olden  
England!  
Great and greater, and greatest of women,  
island heroine, Kapiolani  
Climb the mountain, and flung the berries,  
and dared the Goddess, and freed  
the people  
Of Hawaii

## III

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess  
would wallow in fiery riot and  
revel  
On Kilauea,  
Dance in a fountain of flame with her  
devils, or shake with her thunders  
and shatter her island,  
Rolling her anger  
Thro' blasted valley and flaming forest  
in blood-red cataracts down to  
the sea!

## IV

Long as the lava-light  
Glazes from the lava lake  
Dazing the starlight.

Long as the silvery vapour in daylight  
Over the mountain  
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be  
mingled with either on Hawaii-ee

## V

What saw her Priesthood?  
'Woe to this island if ever a woman  
should handle or gather the berries  
of Pele'

Accursed were she'

And woe to this island if ever a woman  
should climb to the dwelling of  
Pele the Goddess'

Accursed were she'

## VI

One from the Sunrise  
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before  
him

Vanish'd shadow like

Gods and Goddesses,

None but the terrible Pele remaining as

Kapiolani ascended her mountain,

Baffled her priesthood,

Broke the Taboo,

Dipt to the crater,

Cal'd on the Power adored by the

Christians, and crying 'I dare her,

let Pele avenge herself'

Into the flame-pillow dash'd the berries,

and drove the demon from Hawaii-ee

## THE DAWN

"You are but children"

*Egyptian Priest to Selon*

## I

Red of the Dawn'

Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms  
of a Moloch of Tyre,

Man with his brotherless dinner on  
man in the tropical wood,

Priests in the name of the Lord passing  
souls thro' fire to the fire,

Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey  
that float upon human blood'

## II

Red of the Dawn'

Godless fury of peoples, and Christless  
frolic of kings,

And the bolt of war dashing down  
upon cities and blazing farms,

For Babylon was a child new-born,  
and Rome was a babe in arms,

And London and Paris and all the rest  
are as yet but in leading-strings

## III

Dawn not Dry,

While scandal is mouthing a bloodless  
name at her cannibal feast,

And rake-run'd bodies and souls go  
down in a common wreck,

And the press of a thousand cities is  
prized for it smells of the beast,

Or easily violates virgin Truth for a  
coin or a cheque

## IV

Dawn not Day'

Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd  
from the dens in the level below,

Men, with a heart and a soul, no  
slaves of a four-footed will?

But if twenty million of summers are  
stored in the sunlight still,

We are far from the noon of man, there  
is time for the race to grow

## V

Red of the Dawn'

Is it turning a fainter red? so be it, but  
when shall we lay

The Ghost of the Brute that is walking  
and haunting us yet, and be free?

In a hundred, a thousand winters?  
Ah, what will our children be,

The men of a hundred thousand, a  
million summers away?

## THE MAKING OF MAN

WHERE is one that, born of woman,  
altogether can escape

From the lower world within him, moods  
of tiger, or of ape?

Man as yet is being made, and ere the  
crowning Age of ages,  
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch  
him into shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while  
the races flower and fade,  
Prophet eyes may catch a glory slowly  
gaining on the shade,

Till the peoples all are one, and all  
their voices blend in choric  
Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd  
Man is made'

### THE DREAMER

ON a midnight in midwinter when all  
but the winds were dead,  
'The meek shall inherit the earth' was  
a Scripture that rang thro' his  
head,

Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth  
went wailingly past him and said

'I am losing the light of my Youth  
And the Vision that led me of old,  
And I clash with an iron Truth,  
When I make for an Age of gold,  
And I would that my race were run,  
For teeming with liars, and madmen,  
and knaves,

And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs,  
and Slaves,

And darken'd with doubts of a Faith  
that saves,

And crimson with battles, and hollow  
with graves,

To the wail of my winds, and the  
moan of my waves

I whirl, and I follow the Sun'

Was it only the wind of the Night shrill  
ing out Desolation and wrong  
Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he  
thought that he answer'd her wail  
with a song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,  
Heart-weary and overdone '  
But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

He is racing from heaven to heaven  
And less will be lost than won,  
For all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

The Reign of the Meek upon earth,  
O weary one, has it begun?  
But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun'

For moans will have grown sphere  
music

Or ever your race be run '  
And all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun'

### MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways)

Now first we stand and understand,  
And sunder false from true,  
And handle boldly with the hand,  
And see and shape and do

Dash back that ocean with a pier,  
Strow yonder mountain flat,  
A railway there, a tunnel here,  
Mix me this Zone with that'

Bring me my horse—my horse? my wings  
That I may soar the sky,  
For Thought into the outward springs,  
I find her with the eye

O will she, moonlike, sway the man,  
And bring or chase the storm,  
Who was a shadow in the brain,  
And is a living form?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,  
From this my vantage ground  
To those still-working energies  
I spy nor term nor bound

As we surpass our fathers' skill,  
Our sons will shame our own,  
A thousand things are hidden still  
And not a hundred known

# RIFLEMEN FORM

There is a sound of thunder of a  
Storm in the South that awakens the day  
Storm of battle and the anger of war  
Well if it do not red our way  
Storm, Storm, Rattle on form  
Ready, be ready against the storm  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,  
Be not gild'd by a deep sleep  
Are signs of this leaf or grapes of thorns?  
How can a despot feel with the Free?  
Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Let your reforms for a moment go  
Look to your batts, and to the good aims  
Better a rotten borough or so  
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames  
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
Ready, be ready against the storm  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die  
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's  
True we have got—such a faithful ally  
That only the Devil can tell what he  
means

Form, Form, Riflemen Form  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

I have been asked to republish this old poem,  
which was first published in 'The Times,' May  
9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began

## THE TOURNEY

RAITH would fight in Edith's sight,  
For Ralph was Edith's lover,  
Ralph went down like a fire to the fight  
Struck to the left and struck to the right  
Roll'd them over and over  
'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king

Cresques were crack'd and hubbub shrack'd  
Lances snap in sunder,  
Rang the stroke, and sprung the blood,  
Knights were thrack'd and riven, and  
hew'd  
Like broad oaks with thunder  
'O what an arm,' said the king

Edith bow'd her stately head,  
Saw them he confounded,  
Edith Montfort bow'd her head,  
Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red  
As poppies when she crown'd it  
'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king

## THE WANDERER

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,  
And here no longer can I rest,  
Farewell!—You will not speak, my  
friends,  
Unfriendly of your parted guest

O well for him that finds a friend,  
Or makes a friend where'er he come,  
And loves the world from end to end,  
And wanders on from home to home!

O happy he, and fit to live,  
On whom a happy home has power  
To make him trust his life, and give  
His fealty to the halcyon hour!

I count you kind, I hold you true,  
But what may follow who can tell?  
Give me a hand—and you—and you—  
And deem me grateful, and farewell!

## POETS AND CRITICS

THIS thing, that thing is the rage,  
 Helter-skelter runs the age,  
 Minds on this round earth of ours  
 Vary like the leaves and flowers,  
 Fashion'd after certain laws,  
 Sing thou low or loud or sweet,  
 All at all points thou canst not meet,  
 Some will pass and some will pause

What is true at last will tell  
 Few at first will place thee well,  
 Some too low would have thee shine,  
 Some too high—no fault of thine—  
 Hold thine own, and work thy will !  
 Year will graze the heel of year,  
 But seldom comes the poet here,  
 And the Critic's rarer still

A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF  
THE SKIES

A VOICE spake out of the skies  
 To a just man and a wise—  
 'The world and all within it  
 Will only last a minute !'  
 And a beggar began to cry  
 'Food, food or I die !'  
 Is it worth his while to eat,  
 Or mine to give him meat,  
 If the world and all within it  
 Were nothing the next minute ?

## DOUBT AND PRAYER

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy  
 rod,  
 Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain  
 'Alas !'  
 From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass  
 By that same path our true forefathers  
 trod,  
 And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod  
 Draw from my death Thy living flower  
 and grass,  
 Before I learn that Love, which is, and  
 was

My Father, and my Brother, and my  
 God !  
 Steel me with patience ! soften me with  
 grief !  
 Let blow the trumpet strongly while I  
 pray,  
 Till this embattled wall of unbelief  
 My prison, not my fortress, fall away !  
 Then, if Thou willest, let my day be  
 brief,  
 So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the  
 day

## FAITH

## I

DOUBT no longer that the Highest is the  
 wisest and the best,  
 Let not all that saddens Nature blight  
 thy hope or break thy rest,  
 Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the  
 shipwreck, or the rolling  
 Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or  
 the famine, or the pest !

## II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower  
 than the heart's desire !  
 Thro' the gates that bar the distance  
 comes a gleam of what is higher  
 Wait till Death has flung them open,  
 when the man will make the Maker  
 Dark no more with human hatreds in the  
 glare of deathless fire !

## THE SILENT VOICES

WHEN the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
 Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
 Call me not so often back,  
 Silent Voices of the dead,  
 Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
 And the sunlight that is gone !  
 Call me rather, silent voices,  
 Forward to the starry track  
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me,  
 On, and always on !

# GOD AND THE UNIVERSAL

Will the shadow of the cross be cast  
 Upon the world, that is the light?  
 The shadow of the cross be cast  
 Upon the world, that is the light?  
 The shadow of the cross be cast  
 Upon the world, that is the light?

'Sister, mourning on your part of the  
 Love of the Father and  
 The love of the Father and  
 The love of the Father and  
 The love of the Father and

## THE DEATH OF THE DUNE OF CLARICE AND AVON- DALE.

To the Mothers

The shadow of the cross be cast  
 Upon the world, that is the light?  
 The shadow of the cross be cast  
 Upon the world, that is the light?

How I'd in the shadow cast by  
 The cross

So peacefully for us, truthful reverent,

Mean? That a world-wide Empire  
 Shall be with you

That the shadows are clouded by  
 The cross

Were clearer solace Yet be comforted,  
 For it thus ends be ruled by Perfect

Love

Then after his brief range of blameless  
 Days,

The roll of funeral march Angel ear  
 Sounds nigher than the merriest mar-

riage bell

The Face of Death is toward the Sun  
 of Life

His shadow darkens earth his truer  
 Love

Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the  
 roll

And march of that Eternal Harmony  
 Whereof the worlds beat time, tho' faintly

heard

Until the great Hereafter Mourn in  
 hope!

## SONGS FROM THE PLAYS.

### FROM 'QUEEN MARY'

SHAME upon you, Robin,  
Shame upon you now !  
Kiss me would you ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Daisies grow again,  
Kingcups blow again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow

Robin came behind me,  
Kiss'd me well I vow .  
Cuff him could I ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Swallows fly again,  
Cuckoos cry again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow

Come, Robin, Robin,  
Come and kiss me now ,  
Help it can I ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Ringdoves coo again,  
All things woo again  
Come behind and kiss me milking the  
cow !

HAPLESS doom of woman happy in be-  
trothing !  
Beauty passes like a breath and love is  
lost in loathing  
Low, my lute , speak low, my lute, but  
say the world is nothing—  
Low, lute, low !  
Love will hover round the flowers when  
they first awaken ,

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be  
overtaken ,  
Low, my lute ! oh low, my lute ! we  
fade and are forsaken—  
Low, dear lute, low !

### FROM 'HAROLD'

Two young lovers in winter weather,  
None to guide them,  
Walk'd at night on the misty heather ;  
Night, as black as a raven's feather ,  
Both were lost and found together,  
None beside them

Lost, lost, the light of day,  
' I am beside thee '  
Lost, lost, we have lost the way  
' Love, I will guide thee '  
Whither, O whither ? into the river,  
Where we two may be lost together,  
And lost for ever ? ' Oh ' never, oh !  
never,  
Tho' we be lost and be found together '

### FROM 'BECKET'

OVER ! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done ,  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And over and gone with the sun

Over ! the sweet summer closes,  
And never a flower at the close ,  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And winter again and the snows

## DIT.

- 1 Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear  
in the pine overhead?
- 2 No, but the voice of the deep as it  
hollows the cliffs of the land
- 1 Is there a voice coming up with the  
voice of the deep from the strand,  
One coming up with a song in the  
flush of the glimmering red?
- 2 Love that is born of the deep coming  
up with the sun from the sea.
- 1 Love that can shape or can shatter a  
life till the life shall have fled?
- 2 Nay, let us welcome him, Love that  
can lift up a life from the dead
- 1 Keep him away from the lone little  
isle. Let us be, let us be
- 2 Nay, let him make it his own, let him  
reign in it—he, it is he,  
Love that is born of the deep coming  
up with the sun from the sea

BABBLE in bower  
Under the rose!  
Bee mustn't buzz,  
Whoop—but he knows

Kiss me, little one,  
Nobody near!  
Grasshopper, grasshopper,  
Whoop—you can hear

Kiss in the bower,  
Tit on the tree!  
Bird mustn't tell,  
Whoop—he can see.

RAINBOW, stay,  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!  
But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom—  
O rainbow stay

## FROM 'THE CUP'

MOON on the field and the foam,  
Moon on the waste and the wold,  
Moon bring him home, bring him home  
Safe from the dark and the cold,  
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,  
Home with the flock to the fold—  
Safe from the wolf to the fold

ARTEMIS, Artemis, hear us, O Mother,  
hear us, and bless us!  
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to  
the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!  
Hear thy people who praise thee! O help  
us from all that oppress us!  
Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O  
yield them all their desire!

## FROM 'THE FALCON'

'DEAD mountain flowers, dead mountain  
meadow flowers,  
Dearer than when you made your moun-  
tain gay,  
Sweeter than any violet of to day,  
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of  
May,  
To me, tho' all your bloom has died  
away,  
You bloom again, dead mountain meadow  
flowers  
O mountain flowers!  
Dead flowers!'

## FROM 'THE PROMISE OF MAY'

THE town lay still in the low sun light,  
The hen clucked late by the white farm  
gate,  
The maid to her dairy came in from the  
cow,  
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough,  
O joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O joy for the promise of May



But a red fire woke in the hearth of the  
town,  
And a fox from the glen ran away with  
the hen,  
And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the  
cheese,  
And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite  
dropt down,  
And a salt wind burnt the blossoming  
trees,  
O grief for the promise of May, of May,  
O grief for the promise of May

WHAT did ye do, and what did ye say,  
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the wood-  
bine sa gray,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue—  
What did ye say, and what did ye do,  
When ye thought there was na body  
watchin' o' you,  
And you an' your Sally was forkin' the  
haay,  
At the end of the daay,  
For the last load hoam?

What did we do, and what did we say,  
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa  
gray,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue—  
Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,  
What we mowt say, and what we mowt  
do,  
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the  
haay,  
At the end of the daay,  
For the last load hoam?

But what did ye say, and what did ye  
do,  
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallows  
at play,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue?  
Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it  
to you,  
For me an' my Sally we swear'd to be  
true,

To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
may,  
Till the end of the day  
And the last load hoam

GEE oop ' whoa ' Gee oop ' whoa '  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goa  
Thru' slush an' squad  
When roads was bad,  
But hallus ud stop at the Vine an'-the  
Hop,  
Fur borth on 'em knawed as well as  
mysen  
That beer be as good fur 'erses as men  
Gee oop ' whoa ' Gee oop ' whoa '  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goa

O MAN, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow,  
For all the souls on earth that live  
To be forgiven must forgive  
Forgive him seventy times and seven,  
For all the blessed souls in Heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven

O HAPPY lark, that warblest high  
Above thy lowly nest,  
O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
Thro' fields that once were blest,  
O tower springing to the sky,  
O graves in daisies drest,  
O Love and Life, how weary am I,  
And how I long for rest.

#### FROM 'THE FORESTERS'

THE warrior Earl of Allendale,  
He loved the Lady Anne,  
The lady loved the master well,  
The maid she loved the man

All in the castle garden,  
Or ever the day began,  
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
The maid a rose to the man

'I go to fight in Scotland  
With many a savage clan,'  
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl'  
And ever a tear down ran  
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
And the maid a kiss to the man

---

LOVE flew in at the window  
As Wealth walk'd in at the door  
'You have come for you saw Wealth  
coming,' said I  
But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet  
little cry,  
I'll cleave to you rich or poor

Wealth dropt out of the window,  
Poverty crept thro' the door  
'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,'  
said I,  
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me  
the lie,  
I cling to you all the more

---

### DRINKING SONG

LONG live Richard,  
Robin and Richard '  
Long live Richard '  
Down with John '  
Drink to the Lion-heart  
Every one '  
Pledge the Plantagenet,  
Him that is gone  
Who knows whither?  
God's good Angel  
Help him back hither,  
And down with John '  
Long live Robin,  
Robin and Richard '  
Long live Robin,  
And down with John '

To sleep ' to sleep ' The long bright  
day is done,  
And darkness rises from the fallen sun  
To sleep ' to sleep '  
Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the  
day,  
Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade  
away  
To sleep ' to sleep '  
Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past  
be past '  
Sleep, happy soul ' all life will sleep 't  
last  
To sleep ' to sleep '

---

THERE is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be,  
There are no hearts like English hearts  
Such hearts of oak as they be  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be,  
There are no men like Englishmen  
So tall and bold as they be

### Full Chorus

And these will strike for England  
And man and mud be free  
To foil and spoil the tyrant  
Beneath the greenwood tree

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be,  
There are no wives like English wives  
So fair and chaste as they be  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be,  
There are no maids like English maids  
So beautiful as they be

### Full Chorus

And these shall wed with freemen  
And all their sons be free,  
To sing the songs of England  
Beneath the greenwood tree

Up with you, out of the forest and over  
 the hills and away,  
 And over this Robin Hood's bay '  
 Up thro' the light of the seas by the  
 moon's long-silvering ray '  
 To a land where the fay,  
 Not an eye to survey,  
 In the night, in the day,  
 Can have frolic and play  
 Up with you, all of you, out of it I hear  
 and obey  
 Man, lying here alone,  
 Moody creature,  
 Of a nature  
 Stronger, sadder than my own,  
 Were I human, were I human,  
 I could love you like a woman  
 Man, man,  
 You shall wed your Marian  
 She is true, and you are true,  
 And you love her and she loves you ,  
 Both be happy, and adieu for ever and  
 for evermore—adieu

By all the deer that spring  
 Thro' wood and lawn and ling,  
 When all the leaves are green ,  
 By arrow and gray goosewing,  
 When horn and echo ring,  
 We care so much for a King ,  
 We care not much for a Queen—  
 For a Queen, for a Queen o' the  
 woods

By all the leaves of spring,  
 And all the birds that sing  
 When all the leaves are green ,  
 By arrow and by bowstring,  
 We care so much for a King  
 That we would die for a Queen—  
 For a Queen, for a Queen o' the  
 woods

THE bee buzz'd up in the heat  
 'I am faint for your honey, my sweet '  
 The flower said 'Take it, my dear,  
 For now is the spring of the year  
 So come, come '  
 'Hum !'  
 And the bee buzz'd down from the heat  
 And the bee buzz'd up in the cold  
 When the flower was wither'd and old  
 'Have you still any honey, my dear ?'  
 She said 'It's the fall of the year,  
 But come, come !'  
 'Hum !'  
 And the bee buzz'd off in the cold

Now the King is home again, and never-  
 more to roam again,  
 Now the King is home again, the King  
 will have his own again,  
 Home again, home again, and each will  
 have his own again,  
 All the birds in merry Sherwood sing  
 and sing him home again

## CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,  
 And one clear call for me '  
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
 Too full for sound and foam,  
 When that which drew from out the  
 boundless deep  
 Turns again home

Twilight and evening bell,  
 And after that the dark '  
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
 When I embark ,

For tho' from out our bourne of Time  
 and Place  
 The flood may bear me far,  
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
 When I have crost the bar

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